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BELGRAVIA

AN

Illustrated London Magazine

VOL. XXXVI.

JULY to OCTOBER 1878



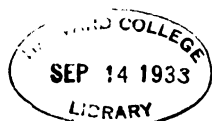
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1878

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BELGRAVIA.

JULY 1878

The Return of the Native.

BY THOMAS HARDY.

BOOK III.—CHAPTER V.

SHARP WORDS ARE SPOKEN, AND A CRISIS ENSUES.

WHEN Yeobright was not with Eustacia, he was sitting slavishly over his books: when he was not reading, he was meeting her. These meetings were carried on with the greatest secrecy.

One afternoon his mother came home from a morning visit to Thomasin. He could see, from a disturbance in the lines of her face that something had happened.

‘I have been told an incomprehensible thing,’ she said mournfully. ‘Captain Drew has let out at the Woman that you and Eustacia Vye are engaged to be married.’

‘We are,’ said Yeobright. ‘But it may not be yet for a very long time.’

‘I should hardly think it would be yet for a very long time. You will take her to Paris, I suppose?’

‘I am not going back to Paris.’

‘What will you do with a wife, then?’

‘Keep a school in Budmouth, as I have told you.’

‘That’s incredible. The place is over-run with schoolmasters. You have no special qualifications—what possible chance is there for such as you?’

‘There is no chance for getting rich. But with my system of education, which is as new as it is true, I shall do a great deal of good to my fellow-creatures.’

‘Pooh! If there had been any other system left to be invented, they would have found it out at the Universities long before this time.’

‘Never, mother. They cannot find it out, because their teachers don’t come in contact with the class which demands such a system—that is, those who have had no preliminary training.

My plan is one for instilling high knowledge into empty minds without first cramming them with what has to be uncrammed again before true study begins.'

'I might have believed you if you had kept yourself free from entanglements; but this woman—if she had been a good girl it would have been bad enough, but being——'

'So she is a good girl.'

'So you think. A band-master's daughter.'

'She is Captain Drew's grand-daughter; and is a lady by instinct.'

'They call him Captain; but anybody is captain. No doubt he has been to sea in some tub or other. Why doesn't he look after her? no lady would rove about the heath at all hours of the day and night, as she does. But that's not all of it. There was something between her and Thomasin's husband at one time—I am as sure of it as that I stand here.'

'Eustacia has told me. He did pay her a little attention a year ago; but there's no harm in that. I like her all the better.'

'Clym, I have no proofs against her, unfortunately. But if she makes you a good wife, there has never been a bad one.'

'Believe me, you are almost exasperating,' said Yeobright vehemently. 'And this very day I had intended to arrange a meeting between you and her. But you give me no peace; you try to thwart my wishes in everything.'

'I hate the thought of any son of mine marrying badly. Yet that is what you seem determined to do. I wish I had never lived to see this; it is too much for me—it is more than I thought!' She turned to the window; her breath was coming quickly, and her lips were pale, parted, and trembling.

'Mother,' said Clym, 'whatever you do, you will always be dear to me—that you know. But one thing I have a right to say, which is, that at my age I am old enough to know what is best for me.'

Mrs. Yeobright remained for some time silent and shaken, as if she could say no more. Then she replied: 'Best? is it best for you to injure your prospects for such a voluptuous idle woman as that? Don't you see that by the very fact of your choosing her you prove that you do not know what is best for you? You give up your whole thoughts—you set your whole soul—to please a woman.'

'I do. And that woman is you.'

'How can you treat me so flippantly!' said his mother, turning again to him with a bitter look. 'You are unnatural, Clym; and I did not expect it.'

'Very likely,' said he cheerlessly. 'You did not know the measure you were going to mete me, and therefore did not know the measure that would be returned to you again.'

'You answer me; you think only of her. You stick to her in all things.'

'That proves her to be worthy. I have never yet supported what is bad. And I do not care only for her. I care for you, and for myself, and for anything that is good. When a woman once dislikes another, she is merciless.'

'Please don't go setting down as my fault what is your obstinate wrong-headedness. If you wished to connect yourself with an unworthy person, why did you come home here to do it? Why didn't you do it in Paris?—it is more the fashion there. You have come only to distress me and shorten my days! I wish that you would bestow your presence only where you bestow your love.'

Clym said huskily: 'You are my mother! I will say no more—beyond this, that I beg your pardon for having thought this my home. I will no longer inflict myself upon you; I'll go.' And he went out with tears in his eyes.

It was a sunny afternoon at the beginning of summer, and the moist hollows of the heath had passed from their brown to their green stage. Yeobright walked to the edge of the basin which extended down from Mistover and Blackbarrow. By this time he was calm, and he looked over the landscape. In the minor valleys between the hillocks which diversified the contour of the vale, the fresh young ferns were luxuriantly growing up, ultimately to reach a height of five or six feet. He descended a little way, flung himself down in a spot where a path emerged from one of the small hollows, and waited. Hither it was that he had promised Eustacia to bring his mother this afternoon, that they might meet and be friends. He was in a nest of vivid green. The ferny vegetation round him, though so abundant, was quite uniform; it was a grove of machine-made trees, a world of green triangles with saw edges, and not a single flower. The air was warm with a vaporous warmth, and the stillness was unbroken. Lizards, grasshoppers, and ants were the only living things to be beheld. The scene seemed to belong to the ancient world of the carboniferous period, when the forms of plants were few, and of the fern kind; when there was neither bud nor blossom, nothing but a monotonous extent of leafage amid which no bird sang.

When he had reclined for some considerable time, gloomily pondering, he discerned above the ferns a drawn bonnet of white silk approaching from the left, and Yeobright knew directly that it covered the head of her he loved. His heart awoke from its apathy to a warm excitement, and, jumping to his feet, he said aloud, 'I knew she was sure to come.'

She vanished in a hollow for a few moments, and then her whole form unfolded itself from the brake.

‘Only you here?’ she exclaimed, with a disappointed air, whose hollowness was proved by her rising redness and her half-guilty low laugh. ‘Where is Mrs. Yeobright?’

‘She has not come,’ he replied in a subdued tone.

‘I wish I had known that you would be here alone,’ she said seriously, ‘and that we were going to have such an idle pleasant time as this. Pleasure not known beforehand is half-wasted; to anticipate it is to double it. I have not thought once to-day of having you all to myself this afternoon, and the actual moment of a thing is so soon gone.’

‘It is indeed.’

‘Poor Clym!’ she continued, looking tenderly into his face. ‘You are sad. Something has happened at your home. Never mind what is—let us only look at what seems.’

‘But, darling, what shall we do?’ said he.

‘Still go on as we do now—just live on from meeting to meeting, never minding about another day. You, I know, are always thinking of that—I can see you are. But you must not—will you, dear, dear Clym?’

‘You are just like all women. They are ever content to build their lives on any incidental position that offers itself, whilst men would fain make a globe to suit them. Listen to this, Eustacia. There is a subject I have determined to put off no longer. Your sentiment on the wisdom of *Carpe diem* does not impress me to-day. Our present mode of life must shortly be brought to an end.’

‘It is your mother.’

‘It is. I love you none the less in telling you; it is only right you should know.’

‘I have feared my bliss,’ she said with the merest motion of her lips. ‘It has been too intense and consuming.’

‘There is hope yet. There are forty years of work in me yet, and why should you despair? I am only at an awkward turning. I wish people wouldn’t be so ready to think that there is no progress without uniformity.’

‘Ah—your mind runs off to the philosophical side of it. Well, these sad and hopeless obstacles are welcome in one sense, for they enable us to look with indifference upon the cruel satires that God loves to indulge in. I have heard of people, who, upon coming suddenly into happiness, have died from anxiety lest they should not live to enjoy it. I felt myself in that whimsical state of uneasiness lately; but I shall be spared it now. Let us walk on.’

Clym took the hand which was already bared for him—it was a

favourite way with them to walk bare hand in bare hand—and led her through the ferns. They formed a very comely picture of love at full flush, as they walked along the valley that late afternoon, the sun sloping down on their right, and throwing their thin spectral shadows, tall as poplar trees, far out across the furze and fern. Eustacia went with her head thrown back fancifully, a certain glad and voluptuous air of triumph pervading her eyes at having won by her own unaided personality a man who was her perfect complement in attainments, appearance, and age. On the young man's part, the paleness of face which he had brought with him from Paris, and the incipient marks of time and thought, were less perceptible than when he returned, the healthful and energetic sturdiness which was his by nature having partially recovered its original proportions. They wandered onward till they reached the nether margin of the heath, where it became marshy, and merged in moorland.

‘I must part from you here, Clym,’ said Eustacia.

They stood still and prepared to bid each other farewell. Everything before them was on a perfect level. The sun, resting on the horizon line, streamed across the ground from between copper-coloured and lilac clouds, stretched out in flats beneath a sky of pale soft green. All dark objects on the earth that lay towards the sun were overspread by a purple haze, against which groups of wailing gnats shone out, rising upwards and dancing about like sparks of fire.

‘Oh! this leaving you is too hard to bear!’ exclaimed Eustacia in a sudden whisper of anguish. ‘Your mother will influence you too much; I shall not be judged fairly; it will get afloat that I am not a good girl, and the witch story will be added to make me blacker.’

‘They cannot. Nobody dares to speak disrespectfully of you or of me.’

‘Oh, how I wish I was sure of never losing you—that you could not be able to desert me anyhow!’

Clym stood silent a moment. His feelings were high, the moment was passionate, and he cut the knot.

‘You shall be sure of me, darling,’ he said, folding her in his arms. ‘We will be married at once.’

‘Oh, Clym!’

‘Do you agree to it?’

‘If—if we can.’

‘We certainly can, being both of full age. And I have not followed my occupation all these seven years without having accumulated some money; and if you will agree to live in a tiny cottage somewhere on the heath, until I take the house in Budmouth for the school, we can do it at a very little expense.’

‘How long shall we have to live in the tiny cottage, Clym?’

‘About six months. At the end of that time I shall have finished my reading—yes, we will do it, and this heart-aching will be over. We shall of course live in absolute seclusion, and our married life will only begin to outward view when we take the house in Budmouth, where I have already addressed a letter on the matter. Would your grandfather allow you?’

‘I think he would—on the understanding that it should not last longer than six months.’

‘I will guarantee that, if no misfortune happens.’

‘If no misfortune happens,’ she repeated slowly.

‘Which is not likely. Dearest, fix the exact day.’

And then they consulted on the question, and the day was chosen. It was to be a fortnight from that time.

This was the end of their talk, and Eustacia left him. Clym watched her as she retired towards the sun. The luminous rays wrapped her up with her increasing remoteness, and the rustle of her dress over the sprouting sedge and grass died away. As he watched, the dead flat of the scenery overpowered him, though he was fully alive to the beauty of that untarnished early summer greenness which was worn for the nonce by the poorest blade. There was something in its oppressive horizontality which too much reminded him of the arena of life; it gave him a sense of bare equality with, and no superiority to, a single entity under the sun.

Eustacia was now no longer the Olympian but the woman to him, a being to fight for, support, help, be maligned for. Now that he had reached a cooler moment, he would have preferred a less hasty marriage; but the card was laid, and he determined to abide by the game. Whether Eustacia was to add one other to the list of those who love too hotly to love long and well, the forthcoming event was certainly a ready way of proving.

CHAPTER VI.

YEOBRIGHT GOES, AND THE BREACH IS COMPLETE.

ALL that evening smart sounds denoting an active packing up came from Yeobright’s room to the ears of his mother downstairs.

Next morning he departed from the house and again proceeded across the heath. A long day’s march was before him, his object being to secure a dwelling to which he might take Eustacia when she became his wife. Such a house, small, secluded, and with its windows boarded up, he had casually observed a month earlier, near a village about five miles off; and thither he directed his steps to-day.

The weather was far different from that of the evening before.

The yellow and vapoury sunset which had wrapped up Eustacia from his parting gaze had presaged change. It was one of those not infrequent days of an English June which are as wet and boisterous as November. The cold clouds hastened on in a body, as if painted on a moving slide. Vapours from other continents arrived upon the wind, and seethed and panted round him as he walked on.

At length Clym reached the margin of a fir and beech plantation which had been enclosed from heath-land in the year of his birth. Here the trees, laden heavily with their new and humid leaves, were now suffering more damage than during the highest winds of winter, when the boughs are specially disencumbered to do battle with the storm. The wet young beeches were undergoing amputations, bruises,crippings, and harsh lacerations, from which the wasting sap would bleed for many a day to come, and which would leave scars visible till the day of their burning. Each stem was wrenched at the root, where it moved like a bone in its socket, and at every onset of the gale convulsive sounds came from the branches, as if pain were felt. In a neighbouring brake a finch was trying to sing; but the wind blew under his feathers till they stood on end, twisted round his little tail, and made him give up his song.

Yet a few yards to Yeobright's right, on the open heath, how ineffectively gnashed the storm! Those gusts which tore the trees merely waved the furze and heather in a light caress. Egdon was made for such times as these.

Yeobright reached the empty house about mid-day. It was almost as lonely as that of Eustacia's grandfather, but the fact that it stood near a heath was disguised by a belt of firs which almost enclosed the premises. He journeyed on about a mile farther to the village in which the owner lived, and, returning with him to the house, arrangements were completed, and the man undertook that one room at least should be ready for occupation the next day. Clym's intention was to live there alone until Eustacia should join him on their wedding-day.

Then he turned to pursue his way homeward through the drizzle that had so greatly transformed the scene. The ferns, among which he had lain in comfort yesterday, were dripping moisture from every frond, wetting his legs through as he brushed past; and the fur of the wild rabbits leaping around him was clotted into dank locks by the same watery leafage.

He reached home damp and weary enough after his ten-mile walk. It had hardly been a propitious beginning, but he had chosen his course, and would show no swerving. The evening and

the following morning were spent in concluding arrangements for his departure. To stay at home a minute longer than necessary after having once come to his determination would be, he felt, only to give new pain to his mother by some word, look, or deed.

He had hired a conveyance and sent off his goods by two o'clock that day. The next step was to get some furniture which, after serving for temporary use in the cottage, would be available for the house at Budmouth when increased by goods of a better description. A mart extensive enough for the purpose existed some miles beyond the spot chosen for his residence, and there he resolved to pass the coming night.

It now only remained to wish his mother good-bye. She was sitting by the window as usual when he came downstairs.

'Mother, I am going to leave you,' he said, holding out his hand.

'I thought you were by your packing,' replied Mrs. Yeobright in a voice from which every particle of emotion was painfully excluded.

'And you will part friends with me?'

'Certainly, Clym.'

'I am going to be married on the twenty-fifth.'

'I thought you were going to be married.'

'And then—and then, you must come and see us. You will understand me better after that, and our situation will not be so wretched as it is now.'

'I do not think it likely I shall come to see you.'

'Then it will not be by my fault or Eustacia's, mother. Good-bye.'

He kissed her cheek, and departed in great misery, which was several hours in lessening itself to a controllable level. The position had been such that nothing more could be said without, in the first place, breaking down a barrier; and that was not to be done.

No sooner had Yeobright gone from his mother's house than her face changed its rigid aspect for one of blank despair. After a while she wept, and her tears brought some relief. During the rest of the day she did nothing but walk up and down the garden-path in a state bordering on stupefaction. Night came, and with it but little rest. The next day, with an instinct to do something which should reduce prostration to mournfulness, she went to her son's room, and with her own hands arranged it in order, for an imaginary time when he should return again. She gave some attention to her flowers, but it was perfunctorily bestowed, for they no longer charmed her.

It was a great relief when, early in the afternoon, Thomasin paid her an unexpected visit. This was not the first meeting between the relatives since Thomasin's marriage, and, past blunders having been in a rough way rectified, they could always greet each other with pleasure and ease.

The oblique band of sunlight which followed her through the door became the young wife well. It illuminated her as her presence illuminated the heath. In her movements, in her gaze, she reminded the beholder of the feathered creatures who lived around her home. All similes and allegories concerning her began and ended with birds. There was as much variety in her motions as in their flight. When she was musing she was a kestrel, which hangs in the air by an invisible motion of its wings. When she was in a high wind her light body was blown against trees and banks like a heron's. When she was frightened she darted noiselessly like a kingfisher. When she was serene she sailed like a swallow, and that is how she was moving now.

'You are looking very blithe, upon my word, Tamsie,' said Mrs. Yeobright with a sad smile. 'How is Damon?'

'He is very well.'

'Is he kind to you, Thomasin?' And Mrs. Yeobright observed her narrowly.

'Pretty fairly.'

'Is that honestly said?'

'Yes, aunt. I would tell you if he were unkind.' She added, blushing, and with hesitation: 'He—I don't know if I ought to complain to you about this, but I am not quite sure what to do. I want some money, you know, aunt—some to buy little things for myself—and he doesn't give me any. I don't like to ask him; and yet, perhaps, he doesn't give it me because he doesn't know. Ought I to mention it to him, aunt?'

'Of course you ought. Have you never said a word on the matter?'

'You see, I had some of my own,' said Thomasin evasively; 'and I have not wanted any of his until lately. I did just say something about it last week; but he seems—not to remember.'

'He must be made to remember. You are aware that I have a little box full of spade guineas, which your uncle put into my hands to divide between yourself and Clym whenever I chose. Perhaps the time has come when it should be done. They can be turned into sovereigns at any moment.'

'I think I should like to have my share—that is, if you don't mind.'

'You shall, if necessary. But it is only proper that you should

first tell your husband distinctly that you are without any, and see what he will do.'

'Very well; I will. . . . Aunt, I have heard about Clym. I know you are in trouble about him, and that's why I have come.'

Mrs. Yeobright turned away, and her features worked in her attempt to conceal her feelings. Then she ceased to make any attempt, and said, 'Oh, Thomasin, do you think he hates me? How can he bear to grieve me so, when I have lived only for him through all these years?'

'Hate you—no,' said Thomasin soothingly. 'It is only that he loves her too well. Look at it quietly—do. It is not so very bad of him. Do you know, I thought it not the worst match he could have made. With the exception of her father, Miss Vye's family is a good one; and he was clever.'

'It is no use, Thomasin; it is no use. Your intention is good; but I will not trouble you to argue. I have gone through the whole that can be said on either side, times—and many times. Clym and I have not parted in anger; we have parted in a worse way. It is not a passionate quarrel that would have broken my heart; it is the steady opposition and persistence in going wrong that he has shown. Oh, Thomasin, he was so good when he was a little boy—so tender and kind.'

'He was, I know.'

'I did not think one whom I called mine would grow up to treat me like this. He spoke to me as if I opposed him to injure him. As though I could wish him ill!'

'There are worse women in the world than Eustacia Vye.'

'There are too many better; that's the agony of it. It was she, Thomasin, and she only, who led your husband to act as he did: I would swear it.'

'No,' said Thomasin eagerly. 'It was before he knew me that he thought of her, and it was nothing but a mere flirtation.'

'Very well; we will let it be so. There is little use in unravelling that now. Sons must be blind if they will. Why is it that a woman can see from a distance what a man cannot see close? Clym must do as he will—he is nothing more to me. And this is maternity—to give one's best years and best love to insure the fate of being despised!'

'You are too unyielding. Think how many mothers there are whose sons have brought them to public shame by real crimes, before you feel so deeply a case like this.'

'Thomasin, don't lecture me—I can't have it. It is the excess above what we expect that makes the force of the blow, and that may not be greater in their case than in mine; they may

have foreseen the worst I am wrongly made, Thomasin,' she added with a mournful smile. 'Some widows can guard against the wounds their children give them by turning their hearts to another husband, and beginning life again. But I always was a poor weak one-ideal creature—I had not the compass of heart nor the enterprise for that. Just as forlorn and stupefied as I was when my husband's spirit flew away I have sat ever since—never attempting to mend matters at all. I was comparatively a young woman then, and I might have had another family by this time, and have been comforted by them for the failure of this one son.'

'It was the more noble in you that you did not.'

'The more noble, the less wise.'

'Forget it, and be soothed, dear aunt. And I shall not leave you alone for long. I shall come and see you every day.'

And for one week Thomasin literally fulfilled her word. She endeavoured to make light of the wedding; and brought news of the preparations, and that she was invited to be present. The next week she was rather unwell, and did not appear. Nothing had as yet been done about the guineas, for Thomasin feared to address her husband again on the subject, and Mrs. Yeobright had insisted upon this.

One day, just before this time, Wildev was standing at the door of the 'Quiet Woman.' In addition to the upward path through the heath to Blackbarrow and Mistover, there was a road which branched from the highway a short distance below the inn, and ascended to Mistover by a circuitous and easy incline. This was the only route for vehicles to the Captain's retreat. A light cart from the nearest town descended the road, and the lad who was driving pulled up in front of the inn for something to drink.

'You come from Mistover?' said Wildev.

'Yes. They are taking in good things up there. Going to be a wedding.' And the man buried his face in his mug.

Wildev had not received an inkling of the fact before, and a sudden expression of pain overspread his face. He turned for a moment into the passage to hide it. Then he came back again.

'Do you mean Miss Vye?' he said. 'How is it—that she can be married so soon?'

'By the will of God and a ready young man, I suppose.'

'You don't mean Mr. Yeobright?'

'Yes. He has been creeping about with her all the spring.'

'I suppose—she is immensely taken with him?'

'She is crazy about him, so their general servant-of-all-work tells me. And that lad Charley that looks after the horse

is all in a daze about it. The stun-poll has got fond-like of her.'

'Is she lively—is she glad? Going to be married so soon—well!'

'It isn't so very soon.'

'No; not so very soon.'

Wildeve went indoors to the empty room, a curious heartache within him. He rested his elbow upon the mantelpiece, and his face upon his hand. When Thomasin entered the room he did not tell her of what he had heard. The old longing for Eustacia had reappeared in his soul; and it was mainly because he had discovered that it was another man's intention to possess her.

To be yearning for the difficult, to be weary of what offered; to care for the remote, to dislike the near: it was Wildeve's nature always. This is the true mark of the man of sentiment. Though Wildeve's fevered feeling had not been elaborated to real poetical compass, it was of the standard sort. Accident only had caused it to be limited in scope. The Swiss painter Godefroi Mind was known as the Raffaele of Cats. Wildeve in the same light might have been called the Rousseau of Egdon life.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MORNING AND THE EVENING OF AN EVENTFUL DAY.

THE wedding morning came. Nobody would have imagined from appearances that Blooms-End had any interest in Mistover that day. A solemn stillness prevailed around the house of Clym's mother, and there was no more animation indoors. Mrs. Yeobright, who had declined to attend the ceremony, sat by the breakfast-table in the old room which communicated immediately with the porch, her eyes listlessly directed towards the open door. It was the room in which, six months earlier, the merry Christmas party had met, to which Eustacia came secretly and as a stranger. The only living thing that entered now was a sparrow; and seeing no movements to cause alarm, he hopped boldly round the room, endeavoured to go out by the window, and fluttered among the pot-flowers. This roused the lonely sitter, who got up, released the bird, and went to the door. She was expecting Thomasin, who had written the night before to state that the time had come when she would wish to have the money, and that she would if possible call this day.

Yet Thomasin occupied Mrs. Yeobright's thoughts but slightly as she looked up the valley of the heath, alive with butterflies, and with grasshoppers whose husky noises on every side formed a whispered chorus. A domestic drama, for which the preparations

were now being made about three miles off, was but little less vividly present to her eyes than if enacted before her. She tried to dismiss the vision, and walked about the garden-plot; but her eyes ever and anon sought out the direction of the parish church to which Mistover belonged, and her excited fancy clove the hills which divided the building from her eyes. The morning wore away. Eleven o'clock struck: could it be that the wedding was then in progress? It must be so. She went on imagining the scene at that church to which he had by this time taken his bride. She pictured the little group of children by the gate as the pony-carriage drove up in which, as Thomasin had learnt, they were going to perform the short journey. Then she saw them enter and proceed to the chancel, and kneel; and the service seemed to go on.

She covered her face with her hands. 'Oh, it is a mistake!' she groaned. 'And he will rue it some day, and think of me!'

While she remained thus, overcome by her forebodings, the old clock indoors whizzed forth twelve strokes. Soon after, faint sounds floated to her ear from over the hills. The breeze came from that quarter, and it had brought with it the notes of distant bells, gaily starting off in a peal: one, two, three, four, five. The ringers at East Egdon were announcing the nuptials of Eustacia and her son.

'Then it is over!' she murmured. 'Well, well! and life too will be over soon. And why should I go on scalding my face like this? Cry about one thing in life, cry about all; one thread runs through the whole piece. And yet we say, a time to laugh!'

Towards evening Wildeve came. Since Thomasin's marriage Mrs. Yeobright had evinced towards him that grim friendliness which at last arises in all such cases of undesired affinity. The vision of what ought to have been is thrown aside in sheer weariness, and brow-beaten human endeavour listlessly makes the best of the fact that is. Wildeve, to do him justice, had behaved very courteously to his wife's aunt; and it was with no surprise that she saw him enter now.

'Thomasin has not been able to come as she promised to do,' he replied to her inquiry, which had been anxious, for she knew that her niece was badly in want of money. 'The Captain came down last night and personally pressed her to join them to-day. So, not to be unpleasant, she determined to go. They fetched her in the pony-chaise, and are going to bring her back.'

'Then it is done!' said Mrs. Yeobright. 'Have they gone to their new home?'

‘I don’t know. I have had no news from Mistover since Thomasin left to go.’

‘You did not go with her?’ said she, as if there might be good reasons why.

‘I could not,’ said Wildeve, reddening slightly. ‘We could not both leave the house; it was rather a busy morning on account of Southerton great market.—I believe you have something to give to Thomasin. If you like, I will take it.’

Mrs. Yeobright hesitated, and wondered if Wildeve knew what the something was. ‘Did she tell you of this?’ she inquired.

‘Not particularly. She casually dropped a remark about having arranged to fetch some article or other.’

‘It is hardly necessary to send it. She can have it whenever she chooses to come.’

‘That won’t be yet. In the present state of her health she must not go on walking so much as she has done.’ He added, with a faint twang of sarcasm: ‘What wonderful thing is it that I cannot be trusted to take?’

‘Nothing worth troubling you with.’

‘One would think you doubted my honesty,’ he said with a laugh, though his colour rose in a quick resentfulness frequent with him.

‘You need think no such thing,’ said she drily. ‘It is simply that I, in common with the rest of the world, feel that there are certain things which had better be done by certain people than by others.’

‘As you like, as you like,’ said Wildeve laconically. ‘It is not worth arguing about. Well, I think I must turn homeward again, as the inn must not be left long in charge of the lad and the maid only.’

He went his way, his farewell being scarcely so courteous as his greeting. But Mrs. Yeobright knew him thoroughly by this time, and took little notice of his manner, good or bad.

When Wildeve was gone, Mrs. Yeobright stood and considered what would be the best course to adopt with regard to the guineas, which she had not liked to entrust to Wildeve. It was hardly credible that Thomasin had told him to ask for them, when the necessity for them had arisen from the difficulty of obtaining money at his hands. At the same time, Thomasin really wanted them, and might be unable to come to Blooms-End for another week at least. To take or send the money to her at the inn would be impolitic, since Wildeve would pretty surely be present, or would discover the transaction; and if, as her aunt suspected, he treated her less kindly than she deserved to be treated, he might then get the

whole sum out of her gentle hands. But on this particular evening Thomasin was at Mistover, and anything might be conveyed to her there without the knowledge of her husband. Upon the whole, the opportunity was worth taking advantage of.

Her son, too, was there, and was now married. There could be no more proper moment to render him his share of the money than the present. And the chance that would be afforded her, by sending him this gift, of showing how far she was from bearing him ill-will, cheered the sad mother's heart.

She went upstairs and took from a locked drawer a little box, out of which she poured a hoard of broad unworn guineas that had lain there many a year. There were a hundred in all, and she divided them into two heaps, fifty in each. Tying up these in small canvas bags, she went down to the garden and called to Christian Cantle, who was loitering about in hope of a supper which was not really owed him. Mrs. Yeobright gave him the money-bags, charged him to go to Mistover, and on no account to deliver them into anyone's hands save her son's and Thomasin's. On further thought, she deemed it advisable to tell Christian precisely what the two bags contained, that he might be fully impressed with their importance. She had never had occasion to doubt his care or his honesty, and nobody could have foreseen that other qualities would be in requisition for such a simple errand. Christian pocketed the money-bags, promised the greatest carefulness, and set out on his way.

'You need not hurry,' said Mrs. Yeobright. 'It will be better not to get there till after dusk, and then nobody will notice you. Come back here to supper if it is not too late.'

It was nearly nine o'clock when he began to ascend the ridge towards Mistover, but, the long days of summer being at their climax, the first obscurity of evening had only just begun to tan the landscape. At this point of his journey Christian heard voices, and found that they proceeded from a company of men and women who were traversing a hollow ahead of him, the tops only of their heads being visible.

He paused and thought of the money he carried. It was almost too early even for Christian to seriously fear robbery: nevertheless he took a precaution which ever since his boyhood he had adopted whenever he carried more than two or three shillings upon his person—a precaution somewhat like that of the owner of the Pitt or Regency diamond when filled with similar misgivings. He took off his boots, untied the guineas, and emptied the contents of one little bag into the right boot, and of the other into the left, spreading them as flatly as possible over the bottom of

each, which was really a spacious coffer by no means limited to the size of the foot. Pulling them on again and lacing them to the very top, he proceeded on his way, more easy in his head than under his soles.

His path converged towards that of the noisy company, and on coming nearer, he found to his relief that they were several East Egdon people whom he knew very well, while with them walked Fairway of Blooms-End.

'What! Christian going too?' said Fairway as soon as he recognised the new-comer. 'You've got no young woman nor wife to your name to gie a gown-piece to, I'm sure.'

'What d'ye mean?' said Christian.

'Why, the raffle. Going to the raffle as well as ourselves?'

'Never knew a word o't. Is it like cudgel-playing, or other smallest forms of bloodshed? I don't want to go, thank you, Mister Fairway, and no offence.'

'Christian don't know the fun o't, and 'twould be a fine sight for him,' said a buxom woman. 'There's no danger at all, Christian. Every man puts in a shilling apiece, and one wins a gown-piece for his wife or sweetheart if he's got one.'

'Well, as that's not my fortune, there's no meaning in it to me. But I should like to see the fine spectacle, if there's nothing of the black art in it, and if a man may look on without cost, or getting into any dangerous tumult.'

'There will be no uproar at all,' said Timothy. 'Sure, Christian, if you'd like to come, we'll see there's no harm done.'

'And no unseemly gaieties, I suppose? You see, neighbours, if so, it would be setting father a bad example, as he is so outwardly given. But a gown-piece for a shilling, and no black art—'tis worth looking in to see, and it wouldn't hinder me half-an-hour. Yes, I'll come, if you'll step a little way towards Mistover with me afterwards, supposing night should have closed in, and nobody else is going that way?'

One or two promised; and Christian, diverging from his direct path, turned down the vale with his companions towards the 'Quiet Woman.'

When they entered the large common room of the inn, they found assembled there about ten men from among the neighbouring population, and the group was increased by the new contingent to double that number. Most of them were sitting round the room in seats divided by wooden elbows like those of cathedral stalls, which were carved with the initials of many an illustrious drunkard of former times who had passed his days and his nights between them, and now lay as an alcoholic cinder in the nearest

churchyard. Among the cups on the long table before the sitter, lay an opened parcel of light drapery—the gown-piece, as it was called, which was to be raffled for. Wildevé was standing with his back to the fireplace, smoking a cigar; and the promoter of the raffle, a packman from a distant town, was expatiating upon the value of the fabric as material for a summer dress.

‘Now, gentlemen,’ he continued, as the new comers drew up to the table, ‘there’s five have entered, and we want four more to make up the number. I think, by the faces of those gentlemen who have just come in, that they are shrewd enough to take advantage of this rare opportunity of beautifying their ladies at a very trifling expense.’

Fairway, Sam, and another placed their shillings on the table, and the man turned to Christian.

‘No, sir,’ said Christian, drawing back with a quick gaze of misgiving. ‘I am only a poor chap come to look on, an it please ye, sir. I don’t so much as know how you do it. If so be I was sure of getting it I would put down the shilling; but I couldn’t otherwise.’

‘I think you might almost be sure,’ said the pedlar. ‘In fact, now I look into your face, even if I can’t say you are sure to win, I can say that I never saw anything look more like winning in my life.’

‘You’ll anyhow have the same chance as the rest of us,’ said Sam.

‘And the extra luck of being the last comer,’ said another.

‘And I was born wi’ a caul, and perhaps can be no more ruined than drowned,’ Christian added, beginning to give way.

Ultimately Christian laid down his shilling, the raffle began, and the dice went round. When it came to Christian’s turn he took the box with a trembling hand, shook it fearfully, and threw a pair-royal. Three of the others had thrown common low pairs, and all the rest mere points.

‘The gentleman looked like winning, as I said,’ observed the chapman blandly. ‘Take it, sir: the article is yours.’

‘Haw-haw-haw!’ said Fairway. ‘I’m damned if this isn’t the quarest start that ever I knowed!’

‘Mine?’ asked Christian with a vacant stare from his target eyes. ‘I—I haven’t got neither maid, wife, nor widdier belonging to me at all, and I’m afeard ’twill make me laughed at to hae it, Master Traveller. What with being curious to join in, I never thought of that. What shall I do wi’ a woman’s clothes, and not lose my decency!’

‘Keep it, to be sure,’ said Fairway, ‘if it is only for luck.

Perhaps 'twill tempt some woman that thy poor carcase had no power over when standing empty-handed.'

'Keep it certainly,' said Wildeve, who had idly watched the scene from a distance.

The table was then cleared of the articles, and the men began to drink.

'Well to be sure!' said Christian half to himself. 'To think I should have been born so lucky as this, and not have found it out until now! What curious creatures these dice be—powerful rulers of us all, and yet at my command. I am sure I never need be afraid of anything after this.' He handled the dice fondly one by one. 'Why, sir,' he said in a confidential whisper to Wildeve, who was near his left hand, 'if I could only use this power that's in me of multiplying money I might do some good to a near relation of yours, seeing what I have got about me of hers—eh?' He tapped one of his money-laden boots upon the floor.

'What do you mean?' said Wildeve.

'That's a secret. Well, I must be going now.' He looked anxiously towards Fairway.

'Where are you going?' Wildeve asked.

'To Mistover Knap. I have to see Mrs. Thomasin there—that's all.'

'I am going there too, to fetch Mrs. Wildeve. We can walk together.'

Wildeve became lost in thought, and a look of inward illumination came into his eyes. It was money for his wife that Mrs. Yeobright could not trust him with. 'Yet she could trust this fellow!' he said to himself. 'Why, doesn't that which belongs to the wife belong to the husband too?'

He called to the pot-boy to bring him his hat, and said, 'Now, Christian, I am ready.'

'Mr. Wildeve,' said Christian timidly, as he turned to leave the room, 'would you mind lending me them wonderful little things that carry my luck inside 'em, that I might practise a bit by myself, you know?' He looked wistfully at the dice and box lying on the mantelpiece.

'Certainly,' said Wildeve carelessly. 'They were only cut out by some lad with his knife, and are worth nothing.' And Christian went back and privately pocketed them.

Wildeve opened the door and looked out. The night was warm and cloudy. 'By Gad! 'tis dark,' he continued. 'But I suppose we shall find our way.'

'If we should lose the path it might be awkward,' said Chris-

tian. 'A lantern is the only weapon that will [make it safe for us.]'

'Let's have a lantern, by all means.' The stable-lantern was fetched and lighted. Christian took up his gown-piece, and the two set out to ascend the hill.

Within the room the men fell into chat till their attention was for a moment drawn to the chimney-corner. This was large, and, in addition to its proper recess, contained within its jambs, like many on Egdon, a receding seat, so that a person might sit there absolutely unobserved, provided there was no fire to light him up, as was the case now and throughout the summer. From the niche a single object protruded into the light from the candles on the table. It was a clay pipe, and its colour was crimson red. The men had been attracted to this object by a voice behind the pipe asking for a light.

'Upon my life, it fairly startled me when you spoke,' said Fairway, handing a candle. 'Oh—'tis the reddleman. You've kept a quiet tongue, young man.'

'Yes, I had nothing to say,' observed Venn. In a few minutes he arose, and wished the company good-night.

Meanwhile Wildevé and Christian had plunged into the heath.

It was a stagnant, warm, and misty night, full of all the heavy perfumes of new vegetation not yet dried by hot suns, and among these particularly the scent of the fern. The lantern, dangling from Christian's hand, brushed the feathery fronds in passing by, disturbing moths and other winged insects, which flew out and alighted upon its horny panes.

'So you have money to carry to Mrs. Wildevé?' said Christian's companion after a silence. 'Don't you think it very odd that it shouldn't be given to me?'

'As man and wife be one flesh, 'twould have been all the same, I should think,' said Christian. 'But my strict documents was, to give the money into Mrs. Wildevé's hand; and 'tis well to do things right.'

'No doubt,' said Wildevé. Any person who had known the circumstances might have perceived that Wildevé was mortified by the discovery that the matter in transit was money, and not, as he had supposed when at Blooms-End, some fancy nicknack which only interested the two women themselves. Mrs. Yeobright's refusal implied that his honour was not considered to be of sufficiently good quality to make him a safe bearer of his wife's property.

'How very warm it is to-night, Christian,' he said, panting, when they were nearly under Blackbarrow. 'Let us sit down for a few minutes, for Heaven's sake.'

Wildeve flung himself down on the soft ferns, and Christian, placing the lantern on the ground, perched himself in a cramped position hard by, his knees almost touching his chin. He presently thrust one hand into his coat-pocket, and began shaking it about.

‘What are you rattling in there?’ said Wildeve.

‘Only the dice, sir,’ said Christian, quickly withdrawing his hand. ‘What magical machines these little things be, Mr. Wildeve! ’Tis a game I should never get tired of. Would you mind my taking ’em out, and looking at ’em for a minute to see how they are made? I didn’t like to look close before the other men for fear they should think it bad manners in me.’ Christian took them out, and examined them in the hollow of his hand by the lantern light. ‘That these little things should carry such luck, and such charm, and such a spell, and such power in ’em, passes all I ever heard or seed,’ he went on, with a fascinated gaze at the dice, which, as is frequently the case in country places, were made of wood, the points being burnt upon each face with the end of a wire.

‘They are a great deal in a small compass, you think?’

‘Yes. Do ye suppose they really be the devil’s playthings, Mr. Wildeve? If so, ’tis no good sign that I be such a lucky man.’

‘You ought to win some money, now that you’ve got them. Any woman would marry you then. Now is your time, Christian, and I would recommend you not to let it slip. Some men are born to luck, some are not. I belong to the latter class.’

‘Did you ever know anybody who was born to it besides myself?’

‘O yes. I once heard of an Italian, who sat down at a gaming-table, with only a louis (that’s a foreign sovereign) in his pocket. He played on for twenty-four hours, and won ten thousand pounds, stripping the bank he had played against. Then there was another man who had lost a thousand pounds, and went to the broker’s next day to sell stock that he might pay the debt. The man to whom he owed the money went with him in a hackney-coach; and to pass the time, they tossed who should pay the fare. The ruined man won, and the other was tempted to continue the game, and they played all the way. When the coachman stopped he was told to drive home again; the whole thousand pounds had been won back by the man who was going to sell.’

‘Ha—ha—splendid!’ exclaimed Christian. ‘Go on—go on!’

‘Then there was a man named Rumbold who was only a waiter at a club-house. He began playing first half-crown stakes, and

then higher and higher till he became very rich, got an appointment in India, and rose to be Governor of Madras. His daughter married a member of parliament, and the Bishop of Carlisle stood godfather to one of the children.'

'Wonderful! wonderful!'

'And once there was a young man in America who lost his last dollar. He went out, sold his watch and chain; came in, and lost them: went out and sold his umbrella; lost again: sold his hat, lost again: sold his coat and came in in his shirt sleeves; lost again. Began taking off his boots, and then a looker-on gave him a trifle for his pluck. With this he won: won back his coat, won back his hat, won back his umbrella, his watch, his money, and went out of the door a rich man.'

'O 'tis too good—it takes away my breath! Mr. Wildevé, I think I will try another shilling with you, as I am one of that sort; no danger can come o't, and you can afford to lose.'

'Very well,' said Wildevé, rising. Searching about with the lantern, he found a large flat stone, which he placed between himself and Christian, and sat down again. The lantern was opened to give more light, and its rays directed upon the stone. Christian put down a shilling, Wildevé another, and each threw. Christian won. They played for two. Christian won again.

'Let us try four,' said Wildevé. They played for four. This time the stakes were won by Wildevé.

'Ah, those little accidents will of course sometimes happen to the luckiest man,' he observed.

'And now I have no more money!' exclaimed Christian excitedly. 'And yet if I could go on, I should get it back again, and more. I wish this was mine.' He struck his boot upon the ground, so that the guineas chinked within.

'What—you have not put Mrs. Wildevé's money there?'

'Yes. 'Tis for safety. Is it any harm to raffle with a married lady's money, when, if I win, I shall only keep my winnings, and give her her own all the same; and if t'other man wins, her money will go to the lawful owner?'

'None at all.'

Wildevé had been brooding ever since they started on the mean estimation in which he was held by his wife's friends; and it cut his heart severely. As the minutes had passed, he had gradually drifted into a revengeful intention without knowing the precise moment of forming it. This was to teach Mrs. Yeobright a lesson, as he considered it to be; in other words, to show her, if he could, that her niece's husband was the proper guardian of her niece's property.

'Well, here goes!' said Christian, beginning to unlace one boot. 'I shall dream of it nights and nights I suppose, but I shall always swear my flesh don't crawl when I think o't.'

He thrust his hand into the boot, and withdrew one of poor Thomasin's precious guineas, piping hot. Wildevé had already placed a sovereign on the stone. The game was then resumed. Wildevé won first, and Christian ventured another, winning himself this time. The game fluctuated, but the average was in Wildevé's favour. Both men became so absorbed in the game that they took no heed of anything but the pigmy objects immediately beneath their eyes: the flat stone, the open lantern, the dice, and the few illuminated fern-leaves which lay under the light, were the whole world to them.

At length Christian lost rapidly; and presently, to his horror, the whole fifty guineas belonging to Thomasin had been handed over to his adversary.

'I don't care—I don't care!' he moaned, and desperately set about untying his left boot to get at the other fifty. 'The devil will toss me into the flames on his three-pronged fork for this night's work, I know. But perhaps I shall win yet, and then I'll get a wife to sit up with me o' nights, and I won't be afeard, I won't! Here's another for'ee, my man.' He slapped another guinea down upon the stone, and the dice-box was rattled again.

Time passed on. Wildevé began to be as excited as Christian himself. When commencing the game his intention had been nothing further than a bitter practical joke on Mrs. Yeobright. To win the money, fairly or otherwise, and to hand it contemptuously to Thomasin in her aunt's presence, had been the dim adumbration of his purpose. But men are drawn from their intentions, even in the course of carrying them out, and it was extremely doubtful, by the time the twentieth guinea had been reached, whether Wildevé was conscious of any other intention than that of winning for his own personal benefit. Moreover, he was now no longer gambling for his wife's money, but for Yeobright's; though of this fact Christian, in his apprehensiveness, did not inform him.

It was nearly eleven o'clock when, with almost a shriek, Christian placed Yeobright's last bright guinea upon the stone. In forty seconds it had gone the way of its companions.

Christian turned and flung himself on the ferns in an agony of remorse. 'Oh, what shall I do with my wretched self!' he groaned. 'What shall I do! Will any good Heaven have mercy upon my wicked soul!'

'Do? Live on just the same.'

'I won't live on just the same. I'll die. I say you are a—a——'

'A man sharper than my neighbour.'

'Yes, a man sharper than my neighbour; a regular sharper.'

'Poor chips-in-porridge, you are very unmannerly.'

'I don't know about that. And I say you are unmannerly, you are poor chips-in-porridge. Yes, that's what I say.'

Christian then pulled on his boots, and, with heavy breathings which could be heard to some distance, dragged his limbs together, arose, and tottered away out of sight. Wildeve set about shutting the lantern, to return to the house, for he deemed it too late to go to Mistover to meet his wife, who was to be driven home in the Captain's four-wheel. While he was closing the little horn door, a figure slowly rose from behind a neighbouring bush, and came forward into the lantern light. It was the tall crimson form of the reddleman.

CHAPTER VIII.

A NEW FORCE DISTURBS THE CURRENT OF THE GAME.

WILDEVE stared. Venn looked coolly towards Wildeve, and without a word being spoken, he deliberately sat himself down where Christian had been seated, thrust his hand into his pocket, drew out a sovereign, and laid it on the stone.

'You have been watching us from behind that bush?' said Wildeve.

The reddleman nodded. 'Down with your stake,' he said. 'Or haven't you pluck enough to go on?'

Now, gambling is a species of amusement which is much more easily begun with full pockets than left off with the same; and though Wildeve in a cooler temper might have prudently declined this invitation, the excitement of his recent success carried him completely away. He placed one of the guineas on the slab beside the reddleman's sovereign. 'Mine is a guinea,' he said.

'A guinea that's not your own,' said Venn sarcastically.

'It is my own,' answered Wildeve haughtily. 'It is my wife's; and what is hers is mine.'

'Very well; let's make a beginning.' He shook the box, and threw eight, ten, and nine; the three casts amounting to twenty-seven.

This encouraged Wildeve. He took the box; and his three casts amounted to forty-five.

Down went another of the reddleman's sovereigns against his first one which Wildeve laid. This time Wildeve threw fifty-one

points, but no pair. The reddleman looked grim, threw a raffle of acea, and pocketed the stakes.

‘Here you are again,’ said Wildeve contemptuously. ‘Double the stakes.’ He laid two of Thomasin’s guineas, and the reddleman his two pounds. Venn won again; new stakes were laid on the stone, and the gamblers proceeded as before.

Wildeve was a nervous and excitable man; and the game was beginning to tell upon his temper. He writhed, fumed, shifted his seat; and the beating of his heart was almost audible. Venn sat with lips impassively closed and eyes reduced to a pair of unimportant twinkles; he scarcely appeared to breathe. He might have been an Arab, an automaton; he would have been like a red-sandstone statue but for the motion of his arm with the dice-box.

The game fluctuated, now in favour of one, now in favour of the other, without any great advantage on the side of either. Nearly twenty minutes were passed thus. The light of the candle had by this time attracted heath-flies, moths, and other winged creatures of night, which floated round the lantern, flew into the flame, or beat about the faces of the two players. Then a rabbit, wonderstruck at the proceedings, would approach the edge of the hollow, and, with ears erect, fix its large timid eyes upon the scene, as if reasoning on what mankind and candle-light could possibly have to do in these haunts at this untoward hour; presently turning, stamping, and leaping away. Sometimes two or three rabbits would come and look on at the same time, and on hearing the rustle Wildeve would say, ‘What’s that?’ and lift his eyes; when they instantly vanished behind the fern and heather.

But neither of the men paid much attention to these things, their eyes being concentrated upon the little flat stone, which to them was an arena vast and important as a battle-field. By this time a change had come over the game: the reddleman won continually. At length sixty guineas—Thomasin’s fifty, and ten of Clym’s—had passed into his hands. Wildeve was reckless, frantic, exasperated.

‘“Won back his coat,”’ said Venn sily.

Another throw, and the money went the same way.

‘“Won back his hat,”’ continued Venn.

‘Oh, oh!’ said Wildeve.

‘“Won back his watch, won back his money, and went out of the door a rich man,”’ added Venn sentence by sentence as stake after stake passed over to him.

‘Five more!’ shouted Wildeve, dashing down the money. ‘And three casts be hanged—one shall decide.’

The red automaton opposite lapsed into silence, nodded, and

followed his example. Wildeve rattled the box, and threw a pair of sixes and five points. He clapped his hands: 'I have done it this time—hurrah!'

'There are two playing and only one has thrown,' said the reddleman, quietly bringing down the box. The eyes of each were then so intently converged upon the stone that one could fancy their beams were visible, like rays in a fog.

Venn lifted the box, and behold a triplet of sixes was disclosed.

Wildeve was full of fury. While the reddleman was grasping the stakes Wildeve seized the dice, and hurled them, box and all, into the darkness, uttering a fearful imprecation. Then he arose and began stamping up and down like a madman.

'Is it all over, then?' said Venn.

'No, no!' cried Wildeve. 'I mean to have another chance yet. I must!'

'But, my good man, what have you done with the dice?'

'I threw them away—it was a momentary irritation—what a fool I am! Here—come and help me to look for them—we must find them again.'

Wildeve snatched up the lantern and began anxiously prowling among the furze and fern.

'You are not likely to find them there,' said Venn, following. 'What did you do such a crazy thing as that for? Here's the box. The dice can't be far off.'

Wildeve turned the light eagerly upon the spot where Venn had found the box, and mauled the herbage right and left. In the course of a few minutes one of the dice was found. They searched on for some time, but no other was to be seen.

'Never mind,' said Wildeve; 'let's play with one.'

'Agreed,' said Venn.

Down they sat again, and recommenced with single guinea stakes; and the play went on smartly. But Fortune had unmistakably fallen in love with the reddleman to-night. He won steadily, till he was the owner of fourteen more of the gold pieces. Seventy-nine of the hundred guineas were now his, Wildeve possessing only twenty-one. The aspect of the two opponents was now singular. Apart from facial motions, a complete diorama of the fluctuations of the game went on in their eyes. A diminutive candle-flame was mirrored in each pupil, and it would have been possible to distinguish therein between the moods of hope and the moods of abandonment, even as regards the reddleman, though his facial muscles betrayed nothing at all. Wildeve played on with the recklessness of despair.

It was about this time that a large death's-head moth advanced from the obscure outer air, wheeled twice round the lantern, flew straight at the candle, and extinguished it by the force of the blow. Wildeve had just thrown, but had not lifted the box to see what he had cast; and now it was impossible.

'What the infernal—!' he shrieked. 'Now, now what shall we do?—Perhaps I have thrown six—have you any matches?'

'None,' said Venn.

'Christian had some—I wonder where he is? Christian!'

But there was no reply to Wildeve's shout, save a mournful whining from the herons which were resting lower down the vale. Both men looked blankly round without rising. As their eyes grew accustomed to the darkness they perceived faint greenish points of light among the grass and fern. These lights dotted the hillside like stars of the sixth magnitude.

'Ah—glowworms,' said Wildeve. 'Wait a minute. We can continue the game.'

Venn sat still, and his companion went hither and thither till he had gathered thirteen glowworms—as many as he could find in a space of four or five minutes—upon a dockleaf which he pulled for the purpose. The reddleman emitted a low humorous laugh when he saw his adversary returned with these. 'Determined to go on, then?' he said drily.

'I always am in such cases,' said Wildeve angrily. And shaking the glowworms from the leaf, he ranged them with a trembling hand in a circle on the stone, leaving a space in the middle for the descent of the dice-box, over which the thirteen tiny lamps threw a pale phosphorescent shine.

The game was again renewed. It happened to be that season of the year at which glowworms put forth their greatest brilliancy, and the light they yielded was more than ample for the purpose, since it is possible on such nights to read the handwriting of a letter by the light of two or three. The incongruity between the men's deeds and their environment was striking. The soft juicy vegetation of the hollow in which they sat, gently rustling in the warm air, the wild animals around, the uninhabited hills, the chink of guineas, the rattle of the dice, the exclamations of the players, combined to form such a bizarre exhibition of circumstances as had never before met on those hills since they first arose out of the deep.

Wildeve had lifted the box as soon as the lights were obtained, and the solitary die proclaimed that the game was still against him.

'I won't play any more : you've been tampering with the dice !' he shouted.

'How—when they were your own ?' said the reddleman.

'We'll change the game : the lowest point shall win the stake—it may cut off my ill luck. Do you refuse ?'

'No—go on,' said Venn.

Wildeve had now ten guineas left ; and each laid five. Wildeve threw three points, Venn two ; and raked in the coins. The other seized the die, and clenched his teeth upon it in sheer rage, as if he would bite it in pieces. 'Never give in—here are my last five !' he cried, throwing them down. 'Hang the glowworms—they are going out. Why don't you burn, you little fools ? Stir them up with a thorn.'

He probed the glowworms with a bit of stick, and rolled them over, till the bright side of their tails was upwards.

'There's light enough. Throw on,' said Venn.

Wildeve brought down the box within the shining circle, and looked eagerly. He had thrown ace. 'Well done !—I said it would turn, and it has turned.' Venn said nothing ; but his hand shook slightly.

He threw ace also.

'Oh !' said Wildeve. 'Curse me !'

The die smacked the stone a second time. It was ace again. Venn looked gloomy, threw : the die was seen to be lying in two pieces, the cleft sides uppermost.

'I've thrown nothing at all,' he said.

'Serves me right—it was I who cracked the die—I heard it. Here—take your money. Blank is less than one.'

'I don't wish it.'

'Take it, I say—you've won it !' And Wildeve threw the stakes against the reddleman's chest. Venn gathered them up, arose, and withdrew from the hollow, Wildeve sitting stupefied.

When he had come to himself he also arose, and with the extinguished lantern in his hand went towards the high road. On reaching it he stood still. The silence of night pervaded the whole heath except in one direction ; and that was towards Mist-over. There he could hear the noise of light wheels, and presently saw two carriage-lamps descending the hill. Wildeve screened himself under a bush, and waited.

The vehicle came on and passed before him. It was a hired carriage, and behind the coachman were two persons whom he knew well. There sat Eustacia and Yeobright, the arm of the latter being round her waist. The course of their journey was

towards the temporary home which Clym had hired and furnished, about five miles to the eastward.

Wildeve forgot the loss of the money at the sight of his lost love, whose preciousness in his eyes was increasing in geometrical progression with each new incident that reminded him of their hopeless division. Brimming with the subtilised misery that he was capable of feeling, he followed the opposite way towards the inn.

About the same moment that Wildeve stepped into the highway, Venn also had reached it at a point a hundred yards farther on, and he, hearing the same wheels, likewise waited till the carriage should come up. When he saw who sat therein, he seemed to be disappointed. Reflecting a minute or two, during which interval the carriage rolled on, he crossed the road, and took a short cut through the furze and heath to a point where the turnpike road bent round in ascending a hill. He was now again in front of the carriage, which presently came up at a walking pace. Venn stepped forward and showed himself.

Eustacia started when the lamp shone upon him, and Clym's arm was involuntarily withdrawn from her waist. He said, 'What—Diggory? you are having a lonely walk.'

'Yes—I beg your pardon for stopping you,' said Venn. 'But I am waiting here for Mrs. Wildeve: I have something to give her from Mrs. Yeobright. Can you tell me if she's gone home from the party yet?'

'No. But she will be leaving soon. You may possibly meet her at the corner.'

Venn made a farewell obeisance, and walked back to his former position, where the bye-road from Mistover joined the highway. Here he remained fixed for nearly half an hour; and then another pair of lights came down the hill. It was the old-fashioned non-descript belonging to the Captain, and Thomasin sat in it alone, driven by Charley.

The reddleman came up as they slowly turned the corner. 'I beg pardon for stopping you, Mrs. Wildeve,' he said. 'But I have something to give you privately from Mrs. Yeobright.' He handed a small parcel; it consisted of the hundred guineas he had just won, roughly twisted up in a piece of paper.

Thomasin recovered from her surprise, and took the packet. 'That's all, ma'am—I wish you good night,' he said, and vanished from her view.

Thus Venn, in his anxiety to rectify matters, had placed in Thomasin's hands not only the fifty guineas which rightly belonged to her, but also the fifty intended for her cousin Clym. His mis-

take had been based upon Wildeve's words at the opening of the game, when he indignantly denied that the first guinea was not his own. It had not occurred to the reddleman that at halfway through the performance Thomasin's money was exhausted, the continuation being with that of another person; and it was an error which afterwards helped to cause more misfortune than treble the loss in money value could have done.

The night was now somewhat advanced; and Venn plunged deeper into the heath, till he came to a ravine where his van was standing—a spot not more than two hundred yards from the site of the gambling bout. He entered this movable home of his, lit his lantern, and, before closing his door for the night, stood reflecting on the circumstances of the preceding hours. While he was standing thus, a form advanced haltingly from behind the van, and a trembling voice said:

'Mr. Venn, I seed the shape of your caravan in the dark, and I crept up to it, and waited till you came, to ask ye to be my champion in a great trouble. O Mr. Venn, I am afeard to face Mrs. Yeobright again. What will be done to me for a wickedness without equal!'

'I hope it is a lesson you will never forget,' said Venn sternly. 'But it is all right now. I saw it all. Go home, and tell Mrs. Yeobright to-morrow that the money is safe delivered. I took it from Mr. Wildeve, and gave it into the proper hands. Come, you need not be afraid—see there, the dawn is visible already.'

He pointed as he spoke to the north quarter of the heavens, which, the clouds having cleared off, was bright with a soft sheen at this midsummer time, though it was only between one and two o'clock. Christian gasped his gratitude to Venn, fixed his eyes on the light sky as on a friend, and went his way. Venn, thoroughly weary, then closed his door, and flung himself down to sleep.

(To be continued.)

The Strolling Player.

I do not think there is any calling that exercises so powerful a fascination over its votaries as the stage; there is a saying in the profession that the man or woman who has once brushed against the side-scenes is lost. The stage appeals most powerfully both to the imagination and the vanity—strong ingredients both, more especially the latter, in that heterogeneous compound called human nature. The man whose ear has once been tickled by the thundering plaudits of hundreds of hands, the woman who has once heard the buzz of admiration from a crowded house, listened to the whispered flattery of fops and flatterers, felt herself raised some steps above this commonplace world, and regarded by romantic young gentlemen as something very near a goddess, can never again sink back into the insignificance and prosiness of every-day occupations. Nor does it require the stage of a fashionable London or great provincial theatre to produce such exaltation; the applause of the noisy and ignorant gallery of a fifth-rate town, or of a few gaping rustics in some miserable barn, is, in its degree, incense as grateful to the country player as the gentle collision of a pair of white kid gloves is to his West End brother. Men and women will undergo every hardship—hunger, toil, insult—for that unsubstantial gratification. Many, by sinking something of their consequence, might obtain subordinate positions in their profession, and live in respectability and comfort; but Hamlet would sooner starve as Hamlet, than feed as Rosencrantz; and Juliet prefers all the humiliations of poverty to the more reputable obscurity of Lady Capulet. Talk to them, and they will assure you they hate the business, they would give the world to get out of it; but the moment they step behind the footlights, hear the round of applause, the whispered ‘Oh, don’t she look lovely!’ of some boy or old woman in the pit, all their troubles are forgotten—at least, until the curtain falls again. These words are written in no mocking spirit; the love of approbation is one of our strongest desires from childhood, and in the actor it is fostered and developed to a greater degree than in any other person.

The shifts and miseries of the stroller’s life have been held up to laughter by novelist, dramatist, and caricaturist, from the times of Scarron and Hogarth, to that of the burlesque writers of the present day. They are very ludicrous, no doubt; but there is an intensely tragic side to them; the actor is as a rule one of the most sen-

sitive of mortals—vainest, if you like: there is not much difference in the signification of the two words—and feels most keenly the buffets and humiliations of his hard fortune; the stroller is too frequently a vagabond and a sot—some enter upon the life simply because they are so by nature; but there are many who become so in the recklessness of despair, and through outraged sensibilities; men have wandered about the country in booths and fit-ups who, had fortune favoured them, or had they been endowed with a stronger resistance to the miserable temptations of their lives, might have risen to a distinguished position. How nearly were George Frederick Cooke and Edmund Kean lost to us! And fortune came too late to both, at least for their own happiness,—the curse of the stroller's life had sunk too deeply into their souls.

There were strollers in the very earliest days of the drama—indeed, it started with strolling; for Thespis in his cart was the father of the theatre and of strolling at the same time. In this country we hear of them long before Elizabeth's reign, and the old dramatists ridiculed their poverty, their rags, their absurd assumptions of great characters, very much in the same strain in which Mr. Byron might take up the subject in this year of grace 1878. Some roamed the country under the protection of noblemen, and thereby escaped the Vagrant Act; others evaded the law as best they could. Before the establishment of regular theatres, plays were performed by the members of guilds, and by the servants and retainers of great families; and many of these conceived such a liking for the recreation, that they deserted their trades or their service, and, banding themselves into companies, wandered about from town to town playing in inn-yards, or barns, or tents. They were not very reputable bodies, depend upon it, and doubtless did much to merit the opprobrium they received from respectability. But when the great dramatists began to write, when regular theatres were established and the actor's art began to be acknowledged and respected, the strollers no doubt participated in the improvements; and when the London theatres were closed on account of the plague, or during the summer months, the inferior players of Blackfriars, the Fortune, the Globe would travel into the country to give the rustics a taste of their skill. But the real stroller has a character and physiognomy of his own. He has been capitally described by Holcroft in his 'Memoirs.'

'A company of travelling comedians, then, is a small kingdom, of which the manager is the monarch. Their code of laws seems to have existed with few material alterations since the days of Shakespeare, who is, with great reason, the god of their idolatry. The person who is rich enough to furnish a wardrobe and scenes,

commences manager, and has his privilege accordingly; if there are twenty persons in the company, for instance, the manager included, the receipts of the house, after all incidental expenses are deducted, are divided into four-and-twenty shares, four of which are called *dead* shares, and taken by the manager as payment for the use of his dresses and scenes; to these is added the share to which he is entitled as a performer. Our manager has five sons and daughters all ranked as performers; so that he sweeps eleven shares—that is, nearly half the profits of the theatre—into his pocket every night. This is a continual subject of discontent to the rest of the actors, who are all, to a man, disaffected to the higher powers. They are, however, most of them in debt to the manager, and of course chained to his galley; a circumstance he does not fail to remind them of whenever they are refractory. They appear to be a set of merry, thoughtless beings, who laugh in the midst of poverty, and who never want a quotation or a story to recruit their spirits. When they get any money they seem in haste to spend it, lest some tyrant, in the shape of a dun, should snatch it from them. They have a circuit or set of towns, to which they resort when the time comes round. I observe that the town's-people are continually railing at them, yet are exceedingly unhappy if they fail to return at the appointed time. It is a saying amongst us that a player's sixpence does not go as far as a townsman's groat; therefore, though the latter are continually abusing them for running in debt, they take good care to indemnify themselves, and are no great losers if they get ten shillings in the pound.'

Some of these itinerants have given their experiences to the world; and very sad, yet very amusing, some of them are. The earliest book of this kind is the life of Colley Cibber's notorious daughter, Charlotte Charke, written by herself, and published in 1755. Once she went on a regular course of strolling through the West of England. In one place she tells us how, after undergoing much misery, she and another, on their way to join a company at Tiverton, with funds utterly exhausted, are met by a farmer on horseback, who, after eyeing them curiously, enquires if they are not 'play-actors.' 'I thought so by the look of ye,' he says; 'you'd better get back to where you came from, then, for by gum you'll starve here!' Pleasant news, this, for the poor weary, hungry wretches! But turning back is impossible. When they arrive at Tiverton, they find all the company away. 'They were reduced to the necessity of playing three times a week at a little market town called Collumpton, within five miles of Tiverton, that they might have the probability of eating once in six days; and a terrible

hazard that was, for the Collumpton audience never amounted to more than twenty shillings at the fullest house, which, when charges were paid, and the players—like so many hungry magpies—had gaped for their profits, might very possibly afford what they call a stock supper, which was generally ended in a quarrel by way of dessert.' At Tiverton they prevail upon some one, after much difficulty, to give them a bespeak night.

'At length the bespoke play was to be enacted, which was the "*Beaux Stratagem*," but such an audience, I dare believe, was never heard of before or since. In the first row of the pit sat a range of drunken butchers, some of whom soon entertained us with the inharmonious music of their nostrils; behind them were seated, as I suppose, their miserable comforts, who seemed to possess the same state of happiness their dear spouses were possessed of; but, having more vivacity than the males, laughed and talked louder than the players.' The strollers revenge themselves upon these inattentive auditors by giving them, instead of the comedy, a medley of speeches from different plays, principally tragedies, and no two having the slightest reference to each other; for while one spouts from '*Cato*' the other answers from '*Jane Shore*;' but the bumpkins never find out the difference between these and Farquhar's comedy, and go away well satisfied.

The poor strollers have not only starvation constantly staring them in the face, but the terrors of the law hanging over their heads. The cruel Vagrant Act, the offspring of puritanism, menaced far more respectable companies than any Charlotte Charke belonged to. In the early lives of the Kembles we have glimpses of this tyranny. Roger Kemble, the father, was a strolling manager; we hear of Sarah at thirteen playing Ariel in a barn behind the King's Head Tavern at Worcester, and of the different receptions the troupe encountered at different towns, according as the proclivities of the magnates were puritanical or liberal; at some places they were driven out like lepers, at others received with open arms, and welcomed and petted by the gentry; at Cheltenham the Honourable Misses Boyle lent Sarah Kemble dresses out of their own wardrobe, and helped her to make others with their own hands.

But far worse than any of these are the experiences of Mrs. Charke, who is connected with only the most degraded class of strollers. At one town they come to, a lawyer helps to support a poor relation by putting the Vagrancy Act into force against the wretched wanderers who travel that way. He issues a warrant for their apprehension, throws them into prison, and his kinsman procures their release for a consideration, after which, being mulcted

of every penny they possess, they are thrust upon the world again to starve or steal; but to their credit it must be said that we seldom hear of their resorting to the latter alternative. There was a humorous side to these wanderings, but we find little of it in this narrative. 'I have seen,' she says, 'an emperor as drunk as a lord, a queen with one ruffle, Lord Townley without shoes, or only apologies for them,' and the Queen in the Spanish Friar obliged to duck and stoop about from side to side to conceal the absence of stockings, which she had good-naturedly lent to some one else.

Somewhat similar is a story told of Weston, the celebrated comedian of the Garrick period. At one time in his strolling days he had but one shirt, and the day on which this was washed he was obliged to keep his bed; but he had the *sleeve* of another, which he pulled over one arm, and when his landlady came into the room to prepare his meals he would thrust the sleeved arm out of bed.

A turnip field was frequently the dining hall of a stage king. Stephen Kemble used to relate how one day, meeting a brother stroller who complained that he had not had a dinner for many days, he offered to take him to a hospitable place where he could eat as much as he liked and have nothing to pay. The hungry actor of course delightedly accepted the invitation, and Kemble led the way into an immense turnip-field, and bade him set to. His companion remonstrated at what he called a cruel joke. 'Well, I've dined here myself all the week,' was the answer. Landladies were laid under contribution as well as farmers by the impecunious players, and we frequently read of flights by night from unpaid lodgings, and bundles and boxes dropped out of windows into friendly hands below. But the most ingenious method of escaping an unpaid landlady was that once resorted to by John Kemble, when left penniless in a town. The good woman was ill, and, procuring a top, he whipped it night and day over her head, until in sheer despair she ordered him to quit the house with bag and baggage—which was exactly what he wanted. Tate Wilkinson, the manager of the York circuit, gives some amusing pictures of the strolling actor's life. He plays Romeo, George Barnwell, Orestes, and three or four other parts at Maidstone, and at the end of the week receives six shillings, while the profits upon his benefit amount to one shilling and sixpence, and two candle-ends. Candle-ends were important items in the shares; what remained unconsumed after the performance was over were equally distributed. A little further on Tate sketches some of the members of a strolling company at Portsmouth. 'Mrs. White was a most extraordinary character, and worthy of record. Whenever Burden,

her son-in-law, gave offence, which was almost perpetually, she used thus to harangue her daughter: "Ma'am, you've married a feller beneath you; you played Lucy last night in 'The Minor' better than Mrs. Cibber could have done, upon my *sould*, and yet this scoundrel would hurt such a divine cretur." "True, mamma," replied the daughter; "but suppose he should cut his throat?" "Let him cut his throat; but he won't cut his throat—no such good luck. But I'll tell you what: if you contradict me, I'll fell you to my feet and trample over your corse, ma'am, for you're a limb, ma'am—your father on his death-bed told me you were a limb. You are as pure as ermine, ma'am, except with Sir Francis Dolval (Delaval), and you shan't live with your husband, ma'am; you've no business to live with your husband, ma'am; the first women of quality, ma'am, don't live with their husbands, ma'am. Does Mrs. Elmy live with her husband, ma'am? No, ma'am. Does Mrs. Clive live with her husband? No, ma'am. Does Mrs. Cibber live with her husband? No, ma'am. So now you see, ma'am, the best women of fashion upon *yearth* don't live with their husbands, ma'am." "What is a parenthesis?" inquired the daughter one day. "O what an infernal limb of an actress you'll make," burst forth the mother indignantly. "What, not know the meaning of 'prentice! Why, 'prentice, ma'am, is the plural of 'prentices!"

Garrick was staying at the time in the neighbourhood of Portsmouth, and Tate having been a member of his company, he bespoke a play, and expressed a polite desire to see Wilkinson in some favourite part. The actor thought that, in their delight at the honour done them by so distinguished a personage as David Garrick, the company would allow him to select any play he thought proper for the occasion. He was wofully mistaken. 'A Mr. White was the yearly Garrick, whose fame sounded and resounded from the county of Devon to the bounds of Hampshire; therefore neither he nor they would permit any display of mine, as each wanted to be a surprising actor and be elected by due right of merit in Drury Lane house of lords and commons. Says the morning gin and brandy-cag hero, with a face unknown to cleanliness, speaking affectedly, and leaving out the letter *r*, "Why is Mr. Wilkinson to appoint a play for this Mr. Ga-ick? Who is Mr. Ga-ick? Mr. Ga-ick has no command over our company at Portsmouth. Mr. Ga-ick cannot be displeased, I think, with *my* Macheath, though I want no *favour* from Mr. Ga-ick," assuring himself thereby of showing even Garrick—here you shall see what you shall see, and by that performance be engaged at Drury Lane, and make King David tremble.'

In these memoirs, and in those of John Bernard and of Riley, we have numerous pictures, some sad, many amusing, of the humiliations and degradations the poor stroller had to undergo at the hands of ignorant and upstart provincials. Every play night a drummer and trumpeter used to go round the town of Norwich, to give out the performance, without which no one would enter the gallery. There was a similar usage at Grantham. Once a company of actors came to the town who resolved to abolish the custom. But the people did not come, and they played to empty houses. One day the Marquis of Granby, who lived in the neighbourhood, sent for the manager and thus addressed him: 'Mr. manager, I like a play, and I like a player, and I shall be glad to serve you; but, my good friend, why are you offended at the sound of a drum? I like it, and all the inhabitants like it. Put my name on your playbill, provided you drum, but *not otherwise.*' After this there was no alternative but to submit; the drum was beaten and the house crammed.

This reminds me of a story told me a little time back by the manager of a travelling company. He had hired a school-room, the only place for entertainments, in some small town; on the night of performance the doors had been opened some time, but no person arrived; very much alarmed, he spoke to a native whom he had employed as money-taker. 'Oh, you haven't rung the bell yet,' was the answer. 'What bell?' 'Why, the school bell, that tells the people you're ready: they won't come till they hear it.' The manager, very much relieved, rushed at the bell and pulled at it lustily, and in a few moments the people came flocking in and speedily filled the place.

Riley, in his 'Itinerant,' gives us a picture of a company of strollers entering Worcester, with bag and baggage, scenery and 'properties,' as good as that of Scarron in the 'Roman Comique.' The manager has preceded his troupe, and goes out to meet them. 'At the entrance of the town I observed a concourse of people collected round a four-wheeled carriage which moved slowly, and on its approach I found to my surprise it was "the property," and such an exhibition! Had the carter endeavoured to excite a mob, he could not have done it more effectually than by the manner in which he had packed the load. Some scenes and figures belonging to a pantomime lay on the top of the boxes, which were numerous and piled very high. To keep them steady he had placed a door on which was painted in large characters, "Tom's Punch House," in front of the waggon; this soon gave a title to the whole. Upon the uppermost box, and right over the door, was a giant's head of huge dimensions, whose lower jaw, being elastic-

hung, opened with every jolt of the carriage. By the side of this tremendous head rode our large mastiff, who, enraged at the shouts of the mob, barked and bellowed forth vengeance. The letters on the door had of course stamped it for a puppet-show, to corroborate which the impudent carter, somewhat in liquor, had placed a paste-board helmet on his head, whilst with awkward gesticulation he thumped an old tambourine, to the no small amusement of the spectators. To finish the farcical physiognomy of this fascinating group, Bonny Long and his wife and nine children sat in the rear, Bonny in a large cocked hat, his wife with a child at her breast, wrapped in a Scotch plaid, and the other eight in little red jackets.

Somewhat abashed at this exhibition, the manager slips down a back street to the theatre; but he has not been there many minutes when a pale and affrighted messenger rushes up to say that the waggon has been overturned and Bonny Long, the prolific father, killed. Away he runs to the spot just in time to see the poor fellow dragged out from beneath a pile of scenes and boxes, with very little more hurt than being nearly suffocated with dust; his wife is in hysterics, 'whilst the eight little brats in scarlet jackets run about like dancing dogs prepared for a stage exhibition, and the mastiff is barking furiously at the crowd in protection of his master's property.

At Gloucester, hearing that a certain noble earl and a party of ladies are staying at an hotel in the city, he puts on 'a handsome suit of black and his best laced ruffles,' and makes his way thither to solicit a bespeak. A servant announces him as the manager of the theatre; he overhears the announcement received with an immoderate peal of laughter and a repetition of the word 'manager!' 'Oh, the ma-na-ger?' drawls my lord; 'show him in; we shall have some fun, my lady.' Very much mortified, Riley is about to depart; when the door is thrown open and the party are discovered. 'Walk in, Mr. Manager,' cries my lord. With a bold step Mr. Manager walks up to my lord and presents him with a list of plays. 'Oh, ay, plays! My lady, will you bespeak a play, my lady?' 'Why, really, my lord,' replies my lady, raising her glass, 'I have no idea of strollers; pray, Mr. Manager, what sort of a set are yours?' 'Have you any fine girls in your troop, Mr. What's-your-name?' drawls another swell. Riley, however, warmly resents this usage, turns on his heel and quits the room. In the course of the day a letter is brought him from one of the ladies, enclosing a ten-pound note and complimenting him upon the spirit he displayed.

The strolling manager greatly depended upon the bespeaks of

the country magnates, for he seldom had a good house except upon those occasions. Stephen Kemble used to relate the story of a very odd bespeak he had once. When he was manager of the Portsmouth theatre he gave only three performances a week. On one of the non-play nights a sailor came up to the doors and looked very disappointed to find them closed. 'I go to sea to-morrow morning,' he said to Kemble, who was standing there, 'and God knows if I shall ever see a play again. How much would it cost, now, to give me one?' The manager considered for a moment and then replied that he thought five pounds would do it. 'Very well; you shall have it,' said Jack, 'on condition that you don't admit another soul but myself.' The bargain was struck, and the sailor sat out the performance in the pit in solitary grandeur, applauding whatever took his fancy, and evidently very much enjoying the dignity of his position.

The small earnings of strolling players in those times, whether they were upon shares or salaries, would not have sufficed to keep body and soul together, had they not been supplemented by the profits of the benefit which was accorded to the principals in each town. The benefit was the poor stroller's salvation—and his degradation. Oh, the supplications and fawnings he had to make, the humiliations he had to undergo, to sell a few pounds' worth of tickets! The haughty monarch of the preceding night might be frequently seen panting along a dusty road in pursuit of some gentleman on horseback, to solicit the purchase of a half-crown ticket. But if he had a wife such solicitations were usually delegated to her, and on many a rainy, snowy, frosty day, Lady Macbeth or Capulet's daughter had to trudge from door to door delivering the play-bills for the night, and humbly begging the patronage of Mrs. Butcher and Mrs. Grocer, who would snub or condescend, according to their humour. If she had children they always accompanied her and had a great effect. Riley relates how the wife of the before-mentioned Bonny Long, as soon as their benefit was announced, would wash her eight children, dress them in scarlet spencers, which made their appearance only upon such occasions, and, upon entering a town, attire herself in her Scotch plaid, and with a bundle of play-bills in her hand would knock at every respectable house to solicit patronage; and usually, thanks to the eight 'little red run-about,' obtain a crowded house, which the mother of such a family must have sorely needed. After the play the performer had to appear before the curtain and servilely return thanks to his 'kind patrons,' accompanied by his wife and children to curtsy the same. Pater- and mater-familias and the eight little red spencers, bowing and curtseying all in a line, must

have presented a very curious appearance. Not to have complied with this custom would have given great offence to the little-great people of a country town ; and the wife of a tragedian being once too ill to walk, he brought her before the curtain *upon his back* rather than risk the offence.

Yet many a young fellow of good birth, educated at a public school, has been tempted to cast his lot into such adventures, inspired by the belief that his genius would carry him one day unto the boards of Drury Lane and be acknowledged by the plaudits of enthusiastic thousands. A few like Booth and Quin and Garrick realised their dreams, but how many more found their golden apples to be only dust and ashes ! John Bernard, whom I have before mentioned, who afterwards attained a respectable position upon the London and an excellent one upon the American stage, ran away from his home at Portsmouth to join a strolling company at Farnham under Manager Jackson. The theatre was the largest room in the Black Bull Inn ; a collection of ' green tatters ' across the middle formed a curtain, a pair of paper screens were the wings, and four candles represented the foot-lights. The scenery consisted of two drops ; one represented a kitchen, but by the introduction of two chairs and a table it became a gentleman's parlour ; add to these a crimson-cushioned yellow-legged elbow-chair, with a banner behind and a stool in front, and it was transformed into a palace. The second drop represented an exterior, which, as it pictured two houses, a hill, a dale, a stream, and some trees, might pass for a wood, a landscape, or a street, according to the fancy of the spectator. The company consisted of a heavy man who played the tyrant in tragedies and the French horn in the orchestra. Mr. Jackson was manager, prompter, money-taker, scene painter, machinist, and violinist ; he was a company in himself, inasmuch as, being letter-perfect in every stock play, he could carry on all the mechanical duties of the house, and play ten parts a night with facility *behind the scenes*—a general practice at that time ; the Romeo, who was an apothecary by day, sang and danced hornpipes ; there was a " very low " comedian, and the Juliet was Mrs. Jackson, a fat, fussy, little old woman.

Manager Jackson used to take money until the last moment he could be spared from the stage ; but even then, although he might be representing the hero of a tragedy, he kept a sharp eye upon the doors to see that no one entered without paying. One night, while in the tent scene of ' Richard III., ' he saw a rustic steal in surreptitiously ; pausing in the very torrent of his passion at the line, ' Hence babbling dreams, you threaten here in vain, ' he stepped forward and, pointing out the delinquent, said, ' That man in the

grey coat hasn't paid!' Then resuming his tragedy he shouted, 'Shadows avaunt, Richard's himself again!'

Another eccentric whom Bernard encountered in his wanderings was Manager Penchard, who, he says, 'was the first and worst of a company five in number.' He had been a manager fifty years, stooped through infirmity and had the gout in both legs, but still continued to play all the juvenile characters. He was a miser, lived upon threepence a day, and had accumulated upwards of a thousand pounds. He always wore a wonderful wig, such an one as would now be seen upon the head of a Lord Chief Justice, and which, he protested, had been worn by Colley Cibber for his fops. In this wig he played 'Hamlet,' 'Lord Townley,' 'Don Felix,' 'Zanga.' Bernard's first introduction to him was in a dingy little room, with a bed in one corner and an immense chest in the other. The manager was seated in an elbow chair, wrapped in a dressing-gown resembling a Venetian tunic, at a three-legged table, eating his breakfast, which consisted of a halfpenny roll and a halfpennyworth of milk. One of the company, who introduced the recruit, begged the loan of a shilling. 'A shilling!' reiterated Penchard; 'what can you do with your money? it was but last Saturday that you shared three-and-sixpence, and this is only Wednesday.' In the evening, Bernard went in front to witness the performance of the 'Recruiting Officer.' The gallant Captain Plume was sustained by the manager, who, when the curtain drew up, was discovered in his elbow-chair, one leg swathed in flannel and resting on a stool. He was attired in a Queen Anne suit of regimentals, and his famous wig was surmounted by a huge cocked hat; all his business consisted in taking snuff and using a very dirty pocket-handkerchief. As the gout had deprived him of all use of his limbs, he could neither make an entrance nor an exit, and when his scene was over the curtain was lowered and he was wheeled off. Mrs. Penchard—a gushing creature of sixty—doubled 'Silvia' and 'Captain Brazen.' Mrs. Penchard, now her husband had given up the part, also appeared occasionally as 'the gallant gay Lothario.'

As a companion picture to Riley's 'Strollers Entering a Town,' here is one by Bernard, of Manager Penchard and his company quitting a town. 'First came Mr. Singer and Mrs. Penchard, arm-in-arm; then old Joe, the stage keeper, leading a neddy, which supported two panniers containing the scenery and wardrobe, and above them, with a leg resting on each, Mr. Penchard himself, dressed in his Ranger suit of "brown and gold," with his distinguishing wig and little three-cornered hat cocked on one side, giving the septuagenarian an air of gaiety that well accorded with his

known attachment for the rakes and lovers of the drama; one hand was knuckled in his side (his favourite position), and the other raised a pinch of snuff to his nose; and as he passed along he nodded and bowed to all about him, and seemed greatly pleased with the attention he excited. His daughter and two other persons brought up the rear.'

Another extraordinary character was one Jemmy Whitely. Once he came to a village where the magistrate, a butterman, was noted for two things—a nervous disorder which caused him to continually nod his head, and an abhorrence of theatrical entertainments. Jemmy found him behind his counter serving a shopful of customers. He took off his hat and, bowing very low, began, 'My name's Mr. Whitely, the manager, well known in the three kingdoms for my respectability of karakter.' Mr. Butterman nodded, but was too busy attending to customers to make any answer. 'And I've come,' pursued Jemmy, 'to ax your permission (nod) in passing through the town (nod) to favour the inhabitants (nod), of whose liberal and enlightened karakter I have often heard (nod, nod) with a few evenings' entertainment," (nod, nod, nod of speechless horror, which Jemmy interpreted into assent and a caution to keep it quiet.) 'Oh, I understand your Worship (nod) very well, sir, (nod) mum! Thank you, sir (nod); your worship and your family will come for nothing (nod, nod, nod). Good morning, sir, St. Patrick and the Saints keep you and your butter' (nod, nod, nod). And ere Mr. Butterman had recovered from his paralysis, Jemmy was away. He had his scenery up in the room he had engaged in a twinkling, the bellman out and the performance announced. When Mr. Butterman recovered from his stupor, believing the whole thing to be a premeditated affront upon his authority, he resolved upon a subtle and deadly vengeance. He allowed the preparations to proceed, the doors to open, the audience to assemble. But as soon as the curtain rose, his constables leaped upon the stage and, seizing upon the unfortunate actors, dragged them away, dressed as they were, into his mighty presence. With a terrible frown and in awful accents, the village potentate demanded of Whitely how he had dared to contaminate the inn and the village by a profane stage play in spite of his authority. Whitely answered that he had given it. 'What! do you mean to assert that I gave you permission?' thundered the Butterman. 'No, sir, but you nodded your head when I axed you; and was not that maning you gave your consent, but didn't want the Calvinistical bogtrotters who was buying your butter to know anything about it?'

Whenever he entered a town of any importance, he always

costumed himself in his Don Felix suit, pink silk and white satin, spangled and slashed, a long feather in his hat and a rapier by his side, preceded by a boy with a bell in his hand to announce the entertainment. In poor places, where money was scarce, Jemmy frequently took the price of admission out in kind; meat, bread, vegetables. At a fishing village once, nothing but fish was brought by the inhabitants. The company remonstrated: man could not live by fish alone. One evening nineteen persons were admitted for a shad apiece, but he stopped the twentieth. 'I am extremely sorry to refuse you, darlin', but if we ate any more fish, by the powers, we shall all be turned into mermaids!'

Mr. Crummles' weakness for thrusting whatever he purchased into his plays, might have been copied from one of the eccentric managers Bernard describes. This gentleman had a favourite Scotch dress, which he introduced upon all occasions. Henry Moreland, in 'The Heir at Law,' was obliged to come on in full Highland costume; to account for which some lines were introduced in which he told how he had been wrecked upon the coast of Scotland (instead of America), and, having lost all his own clothes, had been compelled to adopt the costume of the country. Another manager, having purchased a handsome velvet gold-laced coat of enormous dimensions, always insisted upon its being worn by the heroes of comedy, although some were buried in its capacities, and the skirts dragged the ground. A third had bought an Indian chief's dress, which he never omitted an opportunity of displaying.

But there were frequently worse incongruities and *contretemps* than these in strolling companies. As when an actress playing Lady Anne in Richard III. exclaimed, 'Oh, when shall I have rest?' was answered by a creditor in the pit, 'Not until you've paid the one pound one and tenpence you owe me, ma'am.' As when Romeo tolled the bell for Juliet's funeral, and the lovely Capulet, who used to be buried with an imposing procession before the audience, sang her own dirge as she was borne upon a bier to the tomb. It was also customary in those days for Friar Lawrence to end the play with a moral speech. One night a certain representative of the character, famous for bibulous propensities, as he came to the lines—

From feuds like these such endless troubles flow:
Whate'er the cause, the end is ever woe,

saw a carpenter raising to his lips a pot of beer which he had hidden away in a quiet corner for his own delectation after the performance. Unable to endure the sight, he would not wait to utter the last word, but stopping at 'the end is ever—' rushed off

the stage, rescued his beer, and then thrusting his head round the side scene in sight of the audience, pronounced the word 'woe' in the exact tone which had been so abruptly suspended, and down came the curtain.

The Kembles, as we have seen, strolled; so did many other famous actors: but none who rose to fame ever tasted the full bitterness and degradation of such a life as did Edmund Kean. Once, after walking many miles on his way to an engagement at Braintree, in Essex, he found himself on the Kentish side of the river, without a copper to pay the ferry. With his whole wardrobe tied up in a pocket handkerchief, slung about his neck, he plunged in and swam across the Thames. Then, dripping wet as he was, he pursued his journey. Without having eaten or drunk, he arrived at the theatre just in time to dress for 'Rolla,' which he had to play that night; but he fainted away in the middle of one of the scenes, and was laid up with ague and fever for some time afterwards. Even more sad was a journey he made from Birmingham to Swansea with his young wife, just about to become a mother. Dressed in blue from head to foot, with his dark, sharp, resolute face, a black stock and four swords over his shoulder, suspending a family bundle of clothes, he looked like a poor navy lieutenant. They started on foot with a few shillings in their pockets, and upon arriving at Bristol found themselves penniless. They were obliged to write to the Swansea manager for a loan, which, when it came, was almost entirely swallowed up by the expenses they had incurred while waiting for it. They obtained a passage on board a boat laden with hemp and tar as far as Newport. Thence, again, resumed their weary journey. Sometimes they came upon good Samaritans, who would not take their money for the frugal meal they ordered, at other times they met with brutes, who refused a draught of milk to the poor footsore woman who scarcely knew an hour she might not be seized with the pangs of premature maternity. Again we hear of them destitute at Dumfries, announcing an entertainment in a public-house, to which came one sixpenny auditor. Then they trudged on with their two children to York, where he became so desperate that he offered to enlist, but was persuaded against it by a good-natured officer. At York, thanks to the aid of a benevolent dancing-master, who gave them a five-pound note, and interested himself in procuring patronage for the entertainment, they obtained sufficient money to carry them on to London. But there were some years of strolling still before him ere he attained to that marvellous fame and fortune which so wonderfully contrast with pictures such as these.

One of the biographers of Miss Farren, afterwards Countess of

Derby, gives us some startling pictures of an Irish strolling company of which her mother and she were members in her childhood ; how the widow Brady was played in a costume that consisted only of a pair of high-heeled shoes, a nether garment, and a long great coat ; how Captain Plume could not appear until he had borrowed a pair of yellow plush breeches from the rector's footman ; and how when the company moved each member had to carry a portion of the wardrobe and the scenery upon his or her back ; little Miss Farren always carried the drum. Yet a few years afterwards she was one of the most elegant and refined women upon the stage.

Strolling is now done by companies, sometimes metropolitan ones, travelling with what are called specialities, and made up of fashionable London actors ; and very well they are paid for it. Booths are still to be found in country districts, and in a few old tumble-down theatres in the north and the midlands might be discovered the successors of managers Penchard and Whitely, who bow and scrape to provincial grandeur and humbly solicit its patronage, and play principal parts in a style almost as eccentric as theirs. I once saw the innocent ingenuous apprentice, George Barnwell, performed by an elderly man with a stomach of aldermanic proportions ; while the lovely and beguiling Milwood was presented by a gaunt toothless hag of sixty ; and I have seen the lovely Pauline Deschapelles enacted by a grim-visaged, middle-aged woman, while the pretty daughter was trying to look old as the widow Melnotte. There is nothing so terrible to an actress as giving up the juvenile parts. Neither is the benefit maker extinct ; and Mrs. Bonny Long's descendants may still be seen with a basket of tickets and play-bills, accompanied by interesting offspring, working up a house, and the players are still fleeced by the virtuous townspeople—and do not always pay, and have still their shifts, their hunger, their disappointments, their weary journeys on foot ; and stage-struck youths and maidens are no more deterred by previous examples from embarking their fortunes in such a rotten ship than were their great-great-grandfathers or than will be their great-great-grandsons.

What a monotonous world it is, ever repeating itself, going round and round in one endless circle like a brickmaker's horse !

H. BARTON BAKER.

Our Scientific Observations on a Ghost.

'THEN nothing would convince you of the existence of ghosts, Harry,' I said, 'except seeing one.'

'Not even seeing one, my dear Jim,' said Harry. 'Nothing on earth would make me believe in them, unless I were turned into a ghost myself.'

So saying, Harry drained his glass of whisky toddy, shook out the last ashes from his pipe, and went off upstairs to bed. I sat for a while over the remnants of my cigar, and ruminated upon the subject of our conversation. For my own part, I was as little inclined to believe in ghosts as anybody; but Harry seemed to go one degree beyond me in scepticism. His argument amounted in brief to this,—that a ghost was by definition the spirit of a dead man in a visible form here on earth; but however strange might be the apparition which a ghost-seer thought he had observed, there was no evidence possible or actual to connect such apparition with any dead person whatsoever. It might resemble the deceased in face and figure, but so, said Harry, does a portrait. It might resemble him in voice and manner, but so does an actor or a mimic. It might resemble him in every possible particular, but even then we should only be justified in saying that it formed a close counterpart of the person in question, not that it was his ghost or spirit. In short, Harry maintained, with considerable show of reason, that nobody could ever have any scientific ground for identifying any external object, whether shadowy or material, with a past human existence of any sort. According to him, a man might conceivably see a phantom, but could not possibly know that he saw a ghost.

Harry and I were two Oxford bachelors, studying at the time for our degree in Medicine, and with an ardent love for the scientific side of our future profession. Indeed, we took a greater interest in comparative physiology and anatomy than in physic proper; and at this particular moment we were stopping in a very comfortable farm-house on the coast of Flintshire for our long vacation, with the special object of observing histologically a peculiar sea-side organism, the Thingumbobbum Whatumay-callianum, which is found so plentifully on the shores of North Wales, and which has been identified by Professor Haeckel with the larva of that famous marine ascidian from whom the Professor

himself and the remainder of humanity generally are supposed to be undoubtedly descended. We had brought with us a full complement of lancets and scalpels, chemicals and test-tubes, galvanic batteries and thermo-electric piles; and we were splendidly equipped for a thorough-going scientific campaign of the first water. The farm-house in which we lodged had formerly belonged to the county family of the Egertons: and though an Elizabethan manor replaced the ancient defensive building which had been wisely dismantled by Henry VIII., the modern farm-house into which it had finally degenerated still bore the name of Egerton Castle. The whole house had a reputation in the neighbourhood for being haunted by the ghost of one Algernon Egerton, who was beheaded under James II. for his participation, or rather his intention to participate, in Monmouth's rebellion. A wretched portrait of the hapless Protestant hero hung upon the wall of our joint sitting-room, having been left behind when the family moved to their new seat in Cheshire, as being unworthy of a place in the present baronet's splendid apartments. It was a few remarks upon the subject of Algernon's ghost which had introduced the question of ghosts in general; and after Harry had left the room, I sat for a while slowly finishing my cigar, and contemplating the battered features of the deceased gentleman.

As I did so, I was somewhat startled to hear a voice at my side observe in a bland and graceful tone, not unmixed with aristocratic *hauteur*, 'You have been speaking of me, I believe,—in fact, I have unavoidably overheard your conversation,—and I have decided to assume the visible form and make a few remarks upon what seems to me a very hasty decision on your friend's part.'

I turned round at once, and saw, in the easy-chair which Harry had just vacated, a shadowy shape, which grew clearer and clearer the longer I looked at it. It was that of a man of forty, fashionably dressed in the costume of the year 1685 or thereabouts, and bearing a close resemblance to the faded portrait on the wall just opposite. But the striking point about the object was this, that it evidently did not consist of any ordinary material substance, as its outline seemed vague and wavy, like that of a photograph where the sitter has moved; while all the objects behind it, such as the back of the chair and the clock in the corner, showed through the filmy head and body, in the very manner which painters have always adopted in representing a ghost. I saw at once that whatever else the object before me might be, it certainly formed a fine specimen of the orthodox and old-fashioned apparition. In dress, appearance, and every other particular, it distinctly answered to

what the unscientific mind would unhesitatingly have called the ghost of Algernon Egerton.

Here was a piece of extraordinary luck ! In a house with two trained observers, supplied with every instrument of modern experimental research, we had lighted upon an undoubted specimen of the common spectre, which had so long eluded the scientific grasp. I was beside myself with delight. 'Really, sir,' I said, cheerfully, 'it is most kind of you to pay us this visit, and I'm sure my friend will be only too happy to hear your remarks. Of course you will permit me to call him ?'

The apparition appeared somewhat surprised at the philosophic manner in which I received his advances ; for ghosts are accustomed to find people faint away or scream with terror at their first appearance : but for my own part I regarded him merely in the light of a very interesting phenomenon, which required immediate observation by two independent witnesses. However, he smothered his chagrin—for I believe he was really disappointed at my cool deportment—and answered that he would be very glad to see my friend if I wished it, though he had specially intended this visit for myself alone.

I ran upstairs hastily and found Harry in his dressing-gown, on the point of removing his nether garments. 'Harry,' I cried breathlessly, 'you must come downstairs at once. Algernon Egerton's ghost wants to speak to you.'

Harry held up the candle and looked in my face with great deliberation. 'Jim, my boy,' he said quietly, 'you've been having too much whisky.'

'Not a bit of it,' I answered, angrily. 'Come downstairs and see. I swear to you positively that a Thing, the very counterpart of Algernon Egerton's picture, is sitting in your easy-chair downstairs, anxious to convert you to a belief in ghosts.'

It took about three minutes to induce Harry to leave his room ; but at last, merely to satisfy himself that I was demented, he gave way and accompanied me into the sitting-room. I was half afraid that the spectre would have taken umbrage at my long delay, and gone off in a huff and a blue flame : but when we reached the room, there he was, *in propria personâ*, gazing at his own portrait—or should I rather say his counterpart?—on the wall, with the utmost composure.

'Well, Harry,' I said, 'what do you call that ?'

Harry put up his eyeglass, peered suspiciously at the phantom, and answered in a mollified tone, 'It certainly *is* a most interesting phenomenon. It looks like a case of fluorescence ; but you say the object can talk ?'

‘Decidedly,’ I answered, ‘it can talk as well as you or me. Allow me to introduce you to one another, gentlemen :—Mr. Henry Stevens, Mr. Algernon Egerton ; for though you didn’t mention your name, Mr. Egerton, I presume from what you said that I am right in my conjecture.’

‘Quite right,’ replied the phantom, rising as it spoke, and making a low bow to Harry from the waist upward. ‘I suppose your friend is one of the Lincolnshire Stevenses, sir?’

‘Upon my soul,’ said Harry, ‘I haven’t the faintest conception where my family came from. My grandfather, who made what little money we have got, was a cotton-spinner at Rochdale, but he might have come from heaven knows where. I only know he was a very honest old gentleman, and he remembered me handsomely in his will.’

‘Indeed, sir,’ said the apparition coldly. ‘My family were the Egertons of Egerton Castle, in the county of Flint, Armigeri ; whose ancestor, Radulphus de Egerton, is mentioned in Domesday as one of the esquires of Hugh Lupus, Earl Palatine of Chester. Radulphus de Egerton had a son ——’

‘Whose history,’ said Harry, anxious to cut short these genealogical details, ‘I have read in the Annals of Flintshire, which lies in the next room, with the name you give as yours on the fly-leaf. But it seems, sir, you are anxious to converse with me on the subject of ghosts. As that question interests us all at present much more than family descent, will you kindly begin by telling us whether you yourself lay claim to be a ghost?’

‘Undoubtedly I do,’ replied the phantom.

‘The ghost of Algernon Egerton, formerly of Egerton Castle?’ I interposed.

‘Formerly and now,’ said the phantom, in correction. ‘I have long inhabited, and I still habitually inhabit, by night at least, the room in which we are at present seated.’

‘The deuce you do,’ said Harry warmly. ‘This is a most illegal and unconstitutional proceeding. The house belongs to our landlord, Mr. Hay : and my friend here and myself have hired it for the summer, sharing the expenses, and claiming the sole title to the use of the rooms.’ (Harry omitted to mention that he took the best bedroom himself and put me off with a shabby little closet, while we divided the rent on equal terms.)

‘True,’ said the spectre good-humouredly ; ‘but you can’t eject a ghost, you know. You may get a writ of *habeas corpus*, but the English law doesn’t supply you with a writ of *habeas animam*. The infamous Jeffreys left me that at least. I am sure the enlightened nineteenth century wouldn’t seek to deprive me of it.’

‘Well,’ said Harry, relenting, ‘provided you don’t interfere with the experiments, or make away with the tea and sugar, I’m sure I have no objection. But if you are anxious to prove to us the existence of ghosts, perhaps you will kindly allow us to make a few simple observations?’

‘With all the pleasure in death,’ answered the apparition courteously. ‘Such, in fact, is the very object for which I’ve assumed visibility.’

‘In that case, Harry,’ I said, ‘the correct thing will be to get out some paper, and draw up a running report which we may both attest afterwards. A few simple notes on the chemical and physical properties of a spectre will be an interesting novelty for the Royal Society, and they ought all to be jotted down in black and white at once.’

This course having been unanimously determined upon as strictly regular, I laid a large folio of foolscap on the writing-table, and the apparition proceeded to put itself in an attitude for careful inspection.

‘The first point to decide,’ said I, ‘is obviously the physical properties of our visitor. Mr. Egerton, will you kindly allow us to feel your hand?’

‘You may *try* to feel it if you like,’ said the phantom quietly, but I doubt if you will succeed to any brilliant extent.’ As he spoke, he held out his arm. Harry and I endeavoured successively to grasp it: our fingers slipped through the faintly luminous object as though it were air or shadow. The phantom bowed forward his head; we attempted to touch it, but our hands once more passed unopposed across the whole face and shoulders, without finding any trace whatsoever of mechanical resistance. ‘Experience the first,’ said Harry; ‘the apparition has no tangible material substratum.’ I seized the pen and jotted down the words as he spoke them. This was really turning out a very full-blown specimen of the ordinary ghost!

‘The next question to settle,’ I said, ‘is that of gravity.—Harry, give me a hand out here with the weighing-machine.—Mr. Egerton, will you be good enough to step upon this board?’

Mirabile dictu! The board remained steady as ever. Not a tremor of the steelyard betrayed the weight of its shadowy occupant. ‘Experience the second,’ cried Harry, in his cool, scientific way: ‘the apparition has the specific gravity of atmospheric air.’ I jotted down this note also, and quietly prepared for the next observation.

‘Wouldn’t it be well,’ I inquired of Harry, ‘to try the weight in vacuo? It is possible that, while the specific gravity in air is

equal to that of the atmosphere, the specific gravity in vacuo may be zero. The apparition—pray excuse me, Mr. Egerton, if the terms in which I allude to you seem disrespectful, but to call you a ghost would be to prejudice the point at issue—the apparition may have no proper weight of its own at all.’

‘It would be very inconvenient, though,’ said Harry, ‘to put the whole apparition under a bell-glass: in fact, we have none big enough. Besides, suppose we were to find that by exhausting the air we got rid of the object altogether, as is very possible, that would awkwardly interfere with the future prosecution of our researches into its nature and properties.’

‘Permit me to make a suggestion,’ interposed the phantom, ‘if a person whom you choose to relegate to the neuter gender may be allowed to have a voice in so scientific a question. My friend, the ingenious Mr. Boyle, has lately explained to me the construction of his air-pump, which we saw at one of the Friday evenings at the Royal Institution. It seems to me that your object would be attained if I were to put one hand only on the scale under the bell-glass, and permit the air to be exhausted.’

‘Capital,’ said Harry: and we got the air-pump in readiness accordingly. The spectre then put his right hand into the scale, and we plumped the bell-glass on top of it. The connecting portion of the arm shone through the severing glass, exactly as though the spectre consisted merely of an immaterial light. In a few minutes the air was exhausted, and the scales remained evenly balanced as before.

‘This experiment,’ said Harry judicially, ‘slightly modifies the opinion which we formed from the preceding one. The specific gravity evidently amounts in itself to nothing, being as air in air, and as vacuum in vacuo. Jot down the result, Jim, will you?’

I did so faithfully, and then turning to the spectre I observed, ‘You mentioned a Mr. Boyle, sir, just now. You allude, I suppose, to the father of chemistry?’

‘And uncle of the Earl of Cork,’ replied the apparition, promptly filling up the well-known quotation. ‘Exactly so. I knew Mr. Boyle slightly during our lifetime, and I have known him intimately ever since he joined the majority.’

‘May I ask, while my friend makes the necessary preparations for the spectrum analysis and the chemical investigation, whether you are in the habit of associating much with—er—well, with other ghosts?’

‘Oh yes, I see a good deal of society.’

‘Contemporaries of your own, or persons of earlier and later dates?’

'Dates really matter very little to us. We may have Socrates and Bacon chatting in the same group. For my own part, I prefer modern society—I may say, the society of the latest arrivals.'

'That's exactly why I asked,' said I. 'The excessively modern tone of your language and idioms struck me, so to speak, as a sort of anachronism with your Restoration costume—an anachronism which I fancy I have noticed in many printed accounts of gentlemen from your portion of the universe.'

'Your observation is quite true,' replied the apparition. 'We continue always to wear the clothes which were in fashion at the time of our decease; but we pick up from new-comers the latest additions to the English language, and even, I may say, to the slang dictionary. I know many ghosts who talk familiarly of "awfully jolly hops," and allude to their progenitors as "the governor." Indeed, it is considered quite behind the times to describe a lady as "vastly pretty," and poor Mr. Pepys, who still preserves the antiquated idiom of his diary, is looked upon among us as a dreadfully slow old fogey.'

'But why, then,' said I, 'do you wear your old costumes for ever? Why not imitate the latest fashions from Poole's and Worth's, as well as the latest cant phrase from the popular novels?'

'Why, my dear sir,' answered the phantom, 'we must have *something* to mark our original period. Besides, most people to whom we appear know something about costume, while very few know anything about changes in idiom,'—that I must say seemed to me, in passing, a powerful argument indeed—'and so we all preserve the dress which we habitually wore during our lifetime.'

'Then,' said Harry irreverently, looking up from his chemicals, 'the society in your part of the country must closely resemble a fancy-dress ball.'

'Without the tinsel and vulgarity, we flatter ourselves,' answered the phantom.

By this time the preparations were complete, and Harry inquired whether the apparition would object to our putting out the lights in order to obtain definite results with the spectroscope. Our visitor politely replied that he was better accustomed to darkness than to the painful glare of our paraffin candles. 'In fact,' he added, 'only the strong desire which I felt to convince you of our existence as ghosts could have induced me to present myself in so bright a room. Light is very trying to the eyes of spirits, and we generally take our constitutionals between eleven^{at} night and four in the morning, stopping at home entirely during the moonlit half of the month.'

'Ah, yes,' said Harry, extinguishing the candles; 'I've read, of course, that your authorities exactly reverse our own Oxford rules. You are all gated, I believe, from dawn to sunset, instead of from sunset to dawn, and have to run away helter-skelter at the first streaks of daylight, for fear of being too late for admission without a fine of twopence. But you will allow that your usual habit of showing yourselves only in the very darkest places and seasons naturally militates somewhat against the credibility of your existence. If all apparitions would only follow your sensible example by coming out before two scientific people in a well-lighted room, they would stand a much better chance of getting believed: though even in the present case I must allow that I should have felt far more confidence in your positive reality if you'd presented yourself in broad daylight, when Jim and I hadn't punished the whisky quite as fully as we've done this evening.'

When the candles were out, our apparition still retained its fluorescent, luminous appearance, and seemed to burn with a faint bluish light of its own. We projected a pencil through the spectroscope, and obtained, for the first time in the history of science, the spectrum of a spectre. The result was a startling one indeed. We had expected to find lines indicating the presence of sulphur or phosphorus: instead of that, we obtained a continuous band of pale luminosity, clearly pointing to the fact that the apparition had no known terrestrial element in its composition. Though we felt rather surprised at this discovery, we simply noted it down on our paper, and proceeded to verify it by chemical analysis.

The phantom obligingly allowed us to fill a small phial with the luminous matter, which Harry immediately proceeded to test with all the resources at our disposal. For purposes of comparison I filled a corresponding phial with air from another part of the room, which I subjected to precisely similar tests. At the end of half an hour we had completed our examination—the spectre meanwhile watching us with mingled curiosity and amusement; and we laid our written quantitative results side by side. They agreed to a decimal. The table, being interesting, deserves a place in this memoir. It ran as follows:—

Chemical Analysis of an Apparition.

Atmospheric air	. . . .	96.45 per cent.
Aqueous vapour	. . . .	2.31 "
Carbonic acid	. . . .	1.08 "
Tobacco smoke	. . . .	0.16 "
Volatile alcohol	. . . .	A trace

The alcohol Harry plausibly attributed to the presence of glasses which had contained whisky toddy. The other constituents would have been normally present in the atmosphere of a room where two fellows had been smoking uninterruptedly ever since dinner. This important experiment clearly showed that the apparition had no proper chemical constitution of its own, but consisted entirely of the same materials as the surrounding air.

‘Only one thing remains to be done now, Jim,’ said Harry, glancing significantly at a plain deal table in the corner, with whose uses we were both familiar; ‘but then the question arises, does this gentleman come within the meaning of the Act? I don’t feel certain about it in my own mind, and with the present unsettled state of public opinion on this subject, our first duty is to obey the law.’

‘Within the meaning of the Act?’ I answered; ‘decidedly not. The words of the forty-second section say distinctly “any *living* animal.” Now, Mr. Egerton, according to his own account, is a ghost, and has been dead for some two hundred years or thereabouts: so that we needn’t have the slightest scruple on *that* account.’

‘Quite so,’ said Harry, in a tone of relief. ‘Well then, sir,’ turning to the apparition, ‘may I ask you whether you would object to our vivisectioning you?’

‘Mortuisectioning, you mean, Harry,’ I interposed parenthetically. ‘Let us keep ourselves strictly within the utmost letter of the law.’

‘Vivisectioning? Mortuisectioning?’ exclaimed the spectre, with some amusement. ‘Really, the proposal is so very novel that I hardly know how to answer it. I don’t think you will find it a very practicable undertaking: but still, if you like, yes, you may try your hands upon me.’

We were both much gratified at this generous readiness to further the cause of science, for which, to say the truth, we had hardly felt prepared. No doubt, we were constantly in the habit of maintaining that vivisection didn’t really hurt, and that rabbits or dogs rather enjoyed the process than otherwise; still, we did not quite expect an apparition in human form to accede in this gentlemanly manner to a personal request which after all is rather a startling one. I seized our new friend’s hand with warmth and effusion (though my emotion was somewhat checked by finding it slip through my fingers immaterially), and observed in a voice trembling with admiration, ‘Sir, you display a spirit of self-sacrifice which does honour to your head and heart. Your total freedom from prejudice is perfectly refreshing to the anatomical

mind. 'If all "subjects" were equally ready to be vivisected—no, I mean mortuised—oh,—well,—there,' I added (for I began to perceive that my argument didn't hang together, as 'subjects' usually accepted mortuisection with the utmost resignation), 'perhaps it wouldn't make much difference after all.'

Meanwhile Harry had pulled the table into the centre of the room, and arranged the necessary instruments at one end. The bright steel had a most charming and scientific appearance, which added greatly to the general effect. I saw myself already in imagination drawing up an elaborate report for the Royal Society, and delivering a Croonian Oration, with diagrams and sections complete, in illustration of the 'Vascular System of a Ghost.' But alas, it was not to be. A preliminary difficulty, slight in itself, yet enormous in its preventive effects, unhappily defeated our well-made plans.

'Before you lay yourself on the table,' said Harry, gracefully indicating that article of furniture to the spectre with his lancet, 'may I ask you to oblige me by removing your clothes? It is usual in all these operations to—ahem—in short, to proceed *in puris naturalibus*. As you have been so very kind in allowing us to operate upon you, of course you won't object to this minor but indispensable accompaniment.'

'Well, really, sir,' answered the ghost, 'I should have no personal objection whatsoever; but I'm rather afraid it can't be done. To tell you the truth, my clothes are an integral part of myself. Indeed, I consist chiefly of clothes, with only a head and hands protruding at the principal extremities. You must have noticed that all persons of my sort about whom you have read or heard were fully clothed in the fashion of their own day. I fear it would be quite impossible to remove these clothes. For example, how very absurd it would be to see the shadowy outline of a ghostly coat hanging up on a peg behind a door. The bare notion would be sufficient to cast ridicule upon our whole community. No, gentlemen, much as I should like to gratify you, I fear the thing's impossible. And, to let the whole secret out, I'm inclined to think, for my part, that I haven't got any independent body whatsoever.'

'But surely,' I interposed, 'you must have *some* internal economy, or else how can you walk and talk? For example, have you a heart?'

'Most certainly, my dear sir, and I humbly trust it is in the right place.'

'You misunderstand me,' I repeated: 'I am speaking literally, not figuratively. Have you a central vascular organ on your left-

hand side, with two auricles and ventricles, a mitral and a tricuspid valve, and the usual accompaniment of aorta, pulmonary vein, pulmonary artery, systole and diastole, and so forth ?'

'Upon my soul, sir,' replied the spectre with an air of bewilderment, 'I have never even heard the names of these various objects to which you refer, and so I am quite unable to answer your question. But if you mean to ask whether I have something beating just under my fob (excuse the antiquated word, but as I wear the thing in question I must necessarily use the name), why then, most undoubtedly I have.'

'Will you oblige me, sir,' said Harry, 'by showing me your wrist? It is true I can't *feel* your pulse, owing to what you must acknowledge as a very unpleasant tenuity in your component tissues: but perhaps I may succeed in *seeing* it.'

The apparition held out its arm. Harry instinctively endeavoured to balance the wrist in his hand, but of course failed in catching it. We were both amused throughout to observe how difficult it remained, after several experiences, to realise the fact that this visible object had no material and tangible background underlying it. Harry put up his eyeglass and gazed steadily at the phantom arm; not a trace of veins or arteries could anywhere be seen. 'Upon my word,' he muttered, 'I believe it's true, and the subject has no internal economy at all. This is really very interesting.'

'As it is quite impossible to undress you,' I observed, turning to our visitor, 'may I venture to make a section through your chest, in order, if practicable, to satisfy myself as to your organs generally?'

'Certainly,' replied the good-humoured spectre; 'I am quite at your service.'

I took my longest lancet from its case and made a very neat cut, right across the sternum, so as to pass directly through all the principal viscera. The effect, I regret to say, was absolutely nugatory. The two halves of the body reunited instantaneously behind the instrument, just as a mass of mercury reunites behind a knife. Evidently there was no chance of getting at the anatomical details, if any existed, underneath that brocaded waistcoat of phantasmagoric satin. We gave up the attempt in despair.

'And now,' said the shadowy form, with a smile of conscious triumph, flinging itself easily but noiselessly into a comfortable arm-chair, 'I hope you are convinced that ghosts really do exist. I think I have pretty fully demonstrated to you my own purely spiritual and immaterial nature.'

'Excuse me,' said Harry, seating himself in his turn on the

ottoman: 'I regret to say that I remain as sceptical as at the beginning. You have merely convinced me that a certain visible shape exists apparently unaccompanied by any tangible properties. With this phenomenon I am already familiar in the case of phosphorescent gaseous effluvia. You also seem to utter audible words without the aid of a proper larynx or other muscular apparatus; but the telephone has taught me that sounds exactly resembling those of the human voice may be produced by a very simple membrane. You have afforded us probably the best opportunity ever given for examining a so-called ghost, and my private conviction at the end of it is that you are very likely an egregious humbug.'

I confess I was rather surprised at this energetic conclusion, for my own faith had been rapidly expanding under the strange experiences of that memorable evening. But the visitor himself seemed much hurt and distressed. 'Surely,' he said, 'you won't doubt my word when I tell you plainly that I am the authentic ghost of Algernon Egerton. The word of an Egerton of Egerton Castle was always better than another man's oath, and it is so still, I hope. Besides, my frank and courteous conduct to you both to-night, and the readiness with which I have met all your proposals for scientific examination, certainly entitle me to better treatment at your hands.'

'I must beg ten thousand pardons,' Harry replied, 'for the plain language which I am compelled to use. But let us look at the case in a different point of view. During your occasional visits to the world of living men, you may sometimes have travelled in a railway carriage in your invisible form.'

'I have taken a trip now and then (by a night train, of course), just to see what the invention was like.'

'Exactly so. Well, now, you must have noticed that a guard insisted from time to time upon waking up the sleepy passenger for no other purpose than to look at their tickets. Such a precaution might be resented, say by an Egerton of Egerton Castle, as an insult to his veracity and his honesty. But, you see, the guard doesn't know an Egerton from a Muggins: and the mere word of a passenger to the effect that he belongs to that distinguished family is in itself of no more value than his personal assertion that his ticket is perfectly *en règle*.'

'I see your analogy, and I must allow its remarkable force.'

'Not only so,' continued Harry firmly, 'but you must remember that in the case I have put, the guard is dealing with known beings of the ordinary human type. Now, when a living person introduces himself to me as Egerton of Egerton Castle, or Sir Roger Tichborne

of Alresford, I accept his statement with a certain amount of doubt, proportionate to the natural improbability of the circumstances. But when a gentleman of shadowy appearance and immaterial substance, like yourself, makes a similar assertion, to the effect that he is Algernon Egerton who died two hundred years ago, then I am reluctantly compelled to acknowledge, even at the risk of hurting that gentleman's susceptible feelings, that I can form no proper opinion whatsoever of his probable veracity. Even men, whose habits and constitution I familiarly understand, cannot always be trusted to tell me the truth: and how then can I expect implicitly to believe a being whose very existence contradicts all my previous experiences, and whose properties give the lie to all my scientific conceptions—a being who moves without muscles and speaks without lungs? Look at the possible alternatives, and then you will see that I am guilty of no personal rudeness when I respectfully decline to accept your uncorroborated assertions. You may be Mr. Algernon Egerton, it is true, and your general style of dress and appearance certainly bears out that supposition; but then you may equally well be his Satanic Majesty in person—in which case you can hardly expect me to credit your character for implicit truthfulness. Or again, you may be a mere hallucination of my fancy: I may be suddenly gone mad, or I may be totally drunk,—and now that I look at the bottle, Jim, we must certainly allow that we have fully appreciated the excellent qualities of your capital Glenlivet. In short, a number of alternatives exist, any one of which is quite as probable as the supposition of your being a genuine ghost; which supposition I must therefore lay aside as a mere matter for the exercise of a suspended judgment.'

I thought Harry had him on the hip, there: and the spectre evidently thought so too; for he rose at once and said rather stiffly, 'I fear, sir, you are a confirmed sceptic upon this point, and further argument might only result in one or the other of us losing his temper. Perhaps it would be better for me to withdraw. I have the honour to wish you both a very good evening.' He spoke once more with the *hauteur* and grand mannerism of the old school, besides bowing very low at each of us separately as he wished us good-night.

'Stop a moment,' said Harry rather hastily. 'I wouldn't for the world be guilty of any inhospitality, and least of all to a gentleman, however indefinite in his outline, who has been so anxious to afford us every chance of settling an interesting question as you have. Won't you take a glass of whisky and water before you go, just to show there's no animosity?'

'I thank you,' answered the apparition, in the same chilly tone; 'I cannot accept your kind offer. My visit has already extended to a very unusual length, and I have no doubt I shall be blamed as it is by more reticent ghosts for the excessive openness with which I have conversed upon subjects generally kept back from the living world. Once more,' with another ceremonious bow, 'I have the honour to wish you a pleasant evening.'

As he said these words, the fluorescent light brightened for a second, and then faded entirely away. A slightly unpleasant odour also accompanied the departure of our guest. In a moment, spectre and scent alike disappeared; but careful examination with a delicate test exhibited a faint reaction which proved the presence of sulphur in small quantities. The ghost had evidently vanished quite according to established precedent.

We filled our glasses once more, drained them off meditatively, and turned into our bedrooms as the clock was striking four.

Next morning, Harry and I drew up a formal account of the whole circumstance, which we sent to the Royal Society, with a request that they would publish it in their Transactions. To our great surprise, that learned body refused the paper, I may say with contumely. We next applied to the Anthropological Institute, where, strange to tell, we met with a like inexplicable rebuff. Nothing daunted by our double failure, we despatched a copy of our analysis to the Chemical Society; but the only acknowledgment accorded to us was a letter from the secretary, who stated that 'such a sorry joke was at once impertinent and undignified.' In short, the scientific world utterly refuses to credit our simple and straightforward narrative; so that we are compelled to throw ourselves for justice upon the general reading public at large. As the latter invariably peruse the pages of '*BELGRAVIA*,' I have ventured to appeal to them in the present article, confident that they will redress our wrongs, and accept this valuable contribution to a great scientific question at its proper worth. It may be many years before another chance occurs for watching an undoubted and interesting Apparition under such favourable circumstances for careful observation; and all the above information may be regarded as absolutely correct, down to five places of decimals.

Still, it must be borne in mind that unless an apparition had been scientifically observed as we two independent witnesses observed this one, the grounds for believing in its existence would have been next to none. And even after the clear evidence which we obtained of its immaterial nature, we yet remain entirely in the dark as to its objective reality, and we have not the faintest reason for believing it to have been a genuine unadulterated ghost.

At the best we can only say that we saw and heard Something, and that this Something differed very widely from almost any other object we had ever seen and heard before. To leap at the conclusion that the Something was therefore a ghost, would be, I venture humbly to submit, without offence to Messrs. Crookes and Wallace, a most unscientific and illogical specimen of that peculiar fallacy known as *Begging the Question*.

J. ARBUTHNOT WILSON.

Arnal.

A COMEDIAN whose theatrical career is represented by nearly forty years of uninterrupted success, and who has created a line of characters which, in spite of a legion of imitators, he alone can be said to have adequately sustained, is not to be confounded with the ordinary run of performers who contentedly follow the beaten track of their predecessors, and, as Mr. Planché says of honest John Cooper, 'are always clean and perfect, and may be thoroughly depended upon for everything except acting.' Audiences, as a rule, are apt to be startled rather than attracted by any abrupt innovation either on the part of the dramatist or on that of his interpreter; and it requires something more than mere average merit to reconcile them to any deviation from the established routine. An actor, therefore, who, confident in his own powers, ventures to strike out a path for himself, and succeeds in the attempt, is entitled to more than a passing share of popularity, and may fairly claim to rank among those whom, even when they have 'shuffled off this mortal coil,' posterity will not willingly let die. Such *rareæ aves* were Robson (during a comparatively limited period), and, in a still more remarkable degree, the subject of the present notice.

Etienne Arnal was born in Paris, December 31, 1796, 'tout simplement le fils d'un épicier,' as he himself tells us in his 'Epistle to Bouffé;' and we learn from the same authority that the union of his parents was by no means a happy one.

' Mon père, si j'en crois les gens du voisinage,
Faisait avec ma mère un fort mauvais ménage; '

the result being that, six months after the birth of their child, they separated by mutual consent, completing the arrangement by an equitable division of the household furniture, and agreeing that the infant should be left for the present to the care of his mother. This 'provisional' state of things lasted longer than is usually the case in France, as we shall presently see. Five-and-thirty years later, when Arnal had already attained a certain celebrity, he was surprised one morning by the visit of a shabbily dressed individual, evidently an invalid, who, when requested to state the object of his coming, informed the astonished actor, with a pathetic display of real or fictitious emotion, that he beheld his father.

‘Ah, bah!’ exclaimed our hero. ‘Vous venez un peu tard!’

‘Mieux vaut tard que jamais,’ coolly replied the affectionate parent, installing himself comfortably in an arm-chair.

The newly cemented relationship was not, however, destined to be of long duration, for in less than three months after this touching interview the worthy gentleman had rejoined his ancestors, leaving by way of legacy to his son his blessing, which, all circumstances considered, the recipient probably took for what it was worth.

In 1812, we find Arnal enrolled as a volunteer in what was then called ‘la garde du roi de Rome,’ from which corps he was transferred in the following year to the *tirailleurs*; he appears at that time to have been remarkable for his military ardour, a quality which subsequently gave way to more prudential ideas, as the following anecdote will show. In 1815, he was stationed with his regiment on the bridge of Neuilly, among the troops hastily gathered together by Marmont to defend that approach to Paris against the attacks of the allied army. Beside him was a young acquaintance, scarcely fifteen years of age, and constitutionally timid, whose only thought, notwithstanding the remonstrances and threats of his more warlike comrade, was how to avoid the bullets whistling about him in every direction. Having ineffectually exhausted all his eloquence, Arnal, as a last resource, drew his sword; and declared to his trembling companion that if he continued to exhibit the slightest symptom of fear, he would immediately run him through the body. This assurance, accompanied by a portentous frown, silenced the poor youth for a while; but he nevertheless waited more anxiously than ever for a favourable opportunity of escaping, and, profiting by the moment when his mentor’s back was turned, slipped away unseen, and bolted as fast as his legs would carry him.

Time, it is said, works wonders; and on the memorable July 29, 1830, the ex-*tirailleur*, who had long since abandoned Mars for Thespis, was placidly contemplating from his apartment near the Louvre the struggle between the Swiss guards and the populace, without, it must be owned, the remotest wish to take any active part in the fray. While he was thus philosophically engaged, his solitude was disturbed by the abrupt entrance of a party of patriots in their shirt-sleeves, who, having unceremoniously broken open his door with the butt-ends of their muskets, commenced firing upon the troops from the windows, and summoned their host to join them, which he modestly declined doing. This refusal highly incensed the fiercest-looking of the band, a species of Hercules in rags, who, seizing him by the arm,

bade him choose whether he would fight against the enemies of the people, or be treated as one of them himself. Struck by the voice of his interrogator, Arnal calmly put on his spectacles, and recognising his old Neuilly acquaintance, burst into a hearty laugh, in which the other, after a word of explanation from the actor, cordially joined. 'Tit for tat,' said the future 'Homme blasé,' 'we are quits now, so suppose we dine together!'

Peace being definitively re-established on the restoration of the Bourbons, Arnal, whose passion for military glory had by this time considerably abated (possibly owing to the insufficiency of his pay, which, the cost of shirts, shoes, and other necessities deducted, barely amounted to the fifth part of a halfpenny per day), obtained his dismissal on the plea of being short-sighted, and earned for some months a scanty livelihood by button-making. His sole relaxation was an occasional visit to one or other of the cheap suburban theatres, and still more frequently to the 'spectacle bourgeois' presided over by Doyen in the Rue Transnonain, where, following the example of Bouffé, Samson, Bocage, Mdle. Brohan, and many of their celebrated contemporaries, he made his first appearance in public before an audience chiefly composed of amateurs of the neighbourhood. Labouring under the delusion, like Liston, that his *forte* lay in tragedy, he selected the part of 'Mithridate' for his *début*; and the result of the experiment may be given in his own words:

'Mon public fut saisi de ce rire homérique
Qui charmait tant les dieux sur leur montagne antique;
La pièce était finie, et l'on riait encor
De mon nez, de ma barbe, et de mon casque d'or.'

Enlightened by this mishap, he boldly plunged into the opposite extreme, his next essay being in one of the broadest farces of the *Variétés répertoire*. 'I may be permitted to add,' he says, 'that I obtained some success in the character of "Jocrisse." Doyen's *habitués*, however, while they allowed that I was tolerably amusing in the part, all declared with one accord that I was far more comic in "Mithridate."'

Feeling that he had 'a soul above buttons,' and reflecting that a bad actor was better paid than a good soldier, our hero turned his thoughts seriously to the theatre, and eventually succeeded in obtaining admittance among the supernumeraries of the *Variétés*, then under the management of Brunet. Step by step, he gradually rose from the rank of *figurant* to that of actor, his sphere of utility being nevertheless limited to the third-rate young lovers, a line of characters almost as unsuited to his peculiar talent as

'Mithridate' itself; and he might have thus vegetated until Doomsday, if chance had not procured for him in 1827 an engagement at the Vaudeville.

There Philippe, the renowned 'Monsieur Jovial,' was in all his glory; his extravagant drolleries and boisterous humour had so unmistakably hit the taste of the town, that for a period of several years he may be said to have reigned supreme in the little theatre of the Rue de Chartres. It was therefore, as may well be imagined, no easy task to supplant him in the favour of the public, and Arnal's first attempts meeting with scanty encouragement from the *habitués*, he was half disposed to try his luck elsewhere, when the part of a servant in 'l'Humoriste,' in which he had to recount in a smartly written monologue the tribulations attendant on the unfortunate play-goer possessing no better 'open Sesame' than a *billet de faveur*, furnished him with an opportunity of distinguishing himself in so unexpected and effective a manner as completely to take the audience by surprise, and cause Duvert, one of the authors of the piece, to remark to his son-in-law and *collaborateur* Lauzanne, 'Il y a quelque chose à faire de ce garçon-là !'

The trio were fated ere long to become more intimately acquainted with each other, and if the dramatists had discovered an actor capable of realising their most fanciful conceptions, he was not the less indebted to them for supplying him with a succession of characters exactly adapted to his peculiar talent; and a very cursory glance at his *répertoire* will suffice to show that of all the *vaudevillistes*—and they are legion—who have written for Arnal (Bayard and Mélesville among the number), none have so accurately, so thoroughly understood him as Duvert and Lauzanne. 'Renaudin de Caen,' 'l'Homme Blasé,' 'le Poltron,' 'le Mari de la Dame des Chœurs,' 'M. et Mme. Galochard,' 'le Cabaret de Lustucru,' 'Un Monsieur et une Dame,' 'Ce que Femme veut . . .,' 'Riche d'Amour,' and a dozen similar triumphs, are creations which they alone could have invented, and none but he could have embodied; and the comedian only did them justice when, being asked whether in his opinion he had made their fortune or they his, he replied that without good pieces there could be no good actors; adding that, if they were as contented with his embroidery as he had reason to be with their material, their satisfaction was mutual.

Talking of 'le Mari de la Dame des Chœurs' reminds me of an anecdote related to me by Duvert himself. One day, while conscientiously performing his duty as National Guard, he was accosted by a *voltigeur* of his company, who informed him that he

had seen the piece on the preceding evening, and had never been more amused in his life. 'I assure you,' he added gravely, 'that I infinitely prefer this sort of thing to what is called wit.' ;

'Thank you for the compliment,' said Duvert.

After a brilliant career of twenty years at the Vaudeville, Arnal, tempted by the bait of a higher salary, quitted that theatre in 1848 for the Gymnase, where he appeared shortly before the revolution of February in one of his most attractive characters, that of 'Champignel' in 'Ce que Femme veut . . .'. Neither the piece nor the actor, however, found favour in the sight of the Scribe-nurtured *abonnés* whose fiat was still conclusive in the ex-Théâtre de Madame ; they professed themselves unable to comprehend the one, and absolutely declined to appreciate the other. The consecutive failures of two or three indifferent novelties only tended to make matters worse, and before the year had expired, manager and comedian being heartily tired of each other, the contract between them was annulled by common consent, and early in 1849, the prodigal's return was duly announced in large letters on the *affiche* of the Vaudeville. In July, of the same year he visited London, and the performances given by him and Madame Doche at the St. James's were among the most agreeable features of the season ; during the short stay of these celebrated artists, the most popular pieces of their *répertoire* were successively represented, 'Ce que Femme veut . . .' being indisputably the favourite.

In February, 1850, Arnal, dissatisfied with the secondary position assigned him by the manager of the Vaudeville, withdrew, this time definitely, from the theatre, and signed an engagement at the Variétés, his annual salary (including extra advantages) being fixed at thirty thousand francs, with three months' leave of absence. He remained there six years, during which period he created among other new parts 'le Massacre d'un Innocent,' where he and Numa were irresistibly droll, 'Un Monsieur qui prend la Mouche,' and 'le Supplice de Tantale.' He subsequently migrated for a brief interval to the Palais Royal, re-appeared in 1861 at the Variétés, and finally closed his dramatic career at the Bouffes Parisiens in a musical version of 'Passé Minuit.' The infirmities of age compelling him to retire from the stage, he repaired to Switzerland, for which country he had always manifested a strong predilection, and died at or near Geneva, a year or two after the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian war.

The term 'originality,' so frequently misapplied in describing

the qualities of an actor, has seldom been more correctly or more legitimately employed than in the case of Arnal. He was a comedian *sui generis*, equally unlike those who preceded and those who came after him; his peculiarities of look, voice, and manner were entirely and exclusively his own, and it was as impossible for him to imitate others as for others to imitate him. Physically, his exterior was not prepossessing; he was short in stature and clumsily built, and his face, in addition to being strongly marked with the small-pox, had an habitually serious and vague expression, until animated by some droll conceit which illumined every feature, and imparted to his normally misty and lack-lustre eyes a gleam of roguish humour, the effect of which was altogether irresistible. 'In short,' as has been observed, 'his countenance might be said to resemble one of Diaz's pictures—a combination of incongruous elements, the *ensemble* of which was harmony itself.'

Arnal was essentially, and in the strictest acceptation of the term, a *comic* actor, combining the wildest eccentricity with a certain quaintness and simplicity which, even in his most expansive flights of gaiety, never deserted him; he possessed in an extraordinary degree the faculty of self-restraint, and however outrageous might be the absurdities he had to utter, they were so qualified by the seeming unconsciousness of his tone and manner as to appear almost natural. No better definition of his peculiar style could possibly be given than the following, written in 1855 by M. Jouvin:—'Non seulement il joue avec esprit, mais il joue surtout pour les gens d'esprit; il dit les choses risquées à demi-mot; tant pis pour vous si vous ne savez pas comprendre de même.' Another writer, already quoted, thus describes him:—'His most effective sallies seem to be the result of a sudden and spontaneous impulse, wholly divested of any preparation or forethought. Thus, his very oddities appear not only possible but natural; there is a genuine *bonne foi* in his acting, which invests all he says and does with a semblance of reality, and imparts an interest to his impersonations which mere artificial talent could never give.'

The characters in which he was most at home were those purporting to represent the *bourgeois*, the *petit rentier*, and similar specimens of middle-class society; he was constrained and ill at ease when required to adopt a more aristocratic model. Thus, in the first act of 'l'Homme blasé,' more familiarly known with us as 'Used up,' the contrast between him and Charles Mathews was wholly to the advantage of the latter; whereas in the second, Arnal, in his disguise of a ploughboy, was immeasurably the most effective and the most natural of the two. Mr. Lewes, in his excellent

book 'On Actors and the Art of Acting,' after alluding to the falling off of the English comedian in the concluding portion of the play, expresses his conviction that 'Bouffé or Got (supposing them to have played the parts) could have made the second act quite as remarkable for its representation of character as the first act.' Without wishing to undervalue the merits of the eminent artists referred to, I am inclined to doubt whether either of them would have more faithfully or more successfully realised the conception of the author than the original creator of the part; and I think, if Mr. Lewes had seen him play it, he would have been of the same opinion.

Among the many pieces which have owed their reputation to this inimitable artist, perhaps the one best calculated to display his versatile abilities to their full extent was 'Riche d'Amour,' an English version of which, entitled 'Lend me Five Shillings,' was introduced to the Haymarket stage by Mr. Buckstone. I shall never forget the roar of laughter which greeted Arnal, when, after bewailing his inability to procure the indispensable five francs, and exclaiming in a tone of the most ludicrous despair: 'Si j'avais là un pistolet—une bonne paire de pistolets!' he burst out with the unexpected conclusion: 'Je les vendrais bien cent sous, que diable!' The whole house was taken by surprise, and the face of the actor, revelling in the sensation he had created, was a perfect study.

In those days, the *couplet final* was a necessary accompaniment to every vaudeville; and no one, with the single exception of Déjazet, could sing or (to use the professional term) *détailler* it like Arnal. 'Riche d'Amour,' and another piece by the same authors, 'le Supplice de Tantale,' furnished him with two of the best and most pointed I ever heard; and I give the latter as a specimen of the style of Messrs. Duvert and Lauzanne:—

'La pièce qu'hier Monsieur fit r'présenter,
Je l'applaudis d'un' façon délirante !
Et ce matin (veuillez bien le noter),
Il m' tomb' du ciel quarant' mill' livr's de rente.
Hein, quel exemple ! il est parfait, je crois,
Une fortune pour un peu d'indulgence ;
Certes, il faudrait . . . Soyez de bonne foi,
Ne pas avoir un seul bravo sur soi,
Pour n'en pas risquer la dépense !'

Arnal had a sovereign contempt for theatrical managers in general, and for his own in particular; his especial *bête noire* being Bouffé (not the actor), for some years lessee of the Vaudeville. One day, during the rehearsal, he came into the *foyer* in a tower-

ing passion, and when asked what was the matter, replied that, contrary to the terms of his engagement, he had been required to play in three pieces on the following evening. 'Am I a pack-horse,' he indignantly exclaimed, 'that he expects me to carry all the *répertoire* on my shoulders?' Then, suddenly reflecting, he added, smiling half compassionately, half ironically; 'Au fait, ce pauvre Bouffé, c'est un âne; et il croit que tout le monde lui ressemble!'

But his bitterest foes were the *claqueurs*; unlike most of his fellow-comedians, who consider the *chevaliers du lustre* as important and necessary auxiliaries, he cordially hated them, and resolved one night to play them a trick. Choosing for his purpose a word which they were in the habit of applauding, he pretended to say it as usual, but merely moved his lips without uttering a sound, whereupon the *claque* shouted and clapped in simulated ecstasy; when the noise had subsided, Arnal calmly took up his cue where he had left it, and, emphasizing the hitherto unspoken phrase with peculiar distinctness, looked significantly at the audience, who, heartily enjoying the joke, applauded him until the house rang again. At the conclusion of the performance, the *chef* gravely contended with the air of a deeply injured man that he was in the right, and the comedian in the wrong; for, said he, 'we should not have been a second too soon, if Monsieur had not been a minute too late.'

No one was more exact at rehearsals than Arnal, or more minutely particular as regarded the slightest deviation from established rules; a missing or mislaid 'property,' for instance, entirely upset him. One evening, while playing in 'le Sergent Mathieu,' in which piece he had to seize a stick and put to flight three soldiers, the indispensable weapon had been unfortunately forgotten, and the effect of the scene was consequently spoilt. Boiling with rage, and utterly indifferent to the *qu'en dira-t-on*, he abruptly left the stage, and in spite of the threats and entreaties of the manager and the loudly muttered discontent of the public, stubbornly refused to continue his part. Since then, whenever (which was frequently the case) a similar mishap occurred, and the comedian's voice was heard in angry remonstrance, the *habitues* of the *coulisses* merely shrugged their shoulders, and whispered to each other: 'Tiens, voilà Arnal qui a perdu son bâton.'

During one of his provincial excursions, he happened to play 'Une Passion' in a certain country town; unluckily for him, the audience were already familiar with the piece, having seen it performed by a strolling actor with an elastic wig, the effect of which, from its perpetually bobbing up and down, was extremely ludicrous.

Arnal, to his surprise, found almost for the first time a public unable or unwilling to appreciate him; in vain he exerted himself to thaw the living icicles staring fixedly at him—nothing would do; they looked at one another with a disappointed air, listened coldly and with evident disapprobation to the *couplet final*, and it was not until after the curtain had fallen that he was told in confidence (and in a very disconsolate tone) by the manager *why* he had failed to satisfy these unreasonably difficult judges. ‘Monsieur,’ said that functionary, ‘your talent is incontestable, but, pardon me, how could you possibly think of appearing before *real* connoisseurs without an elastic wig!’

In private life, Arnal was grave and taciturn, fond of solitude, and accustomed to devote his leisure hours to study. Judge, then, of his horror on discovering that the newly installed occupant of the adjoining apartment in the next house, separated only by a thin layer of brick from his own, was an enthusiastic pianist, who not only practised during the entire day, but perseveringly continued his labours until three or four in the morning. Certainly Rubinstein and Bulow are deservedly popular artists, but it is a question whether their next-door neighbours are as favourably disposed towards them as the public in general. However this may be, our hero, feeling nowise inclined to sacrifice his peace by day and his rest by night without a struggle, indited a polite note to his persecutor, requesting him at least to suspend his manual exertions between midnight and 7 A.M.; and impatiently awaited the answer, which ran as follows:—

‘If Monsieur Arnal fancies that he is invariably an amusing actor, he is mistaken; but this is his affair, not mine. I do not interfere with him, and demand reciprocity.’

‘Ah!’ cried the irritated comedian, ‘you will have it, then. So be it; war to the knife!’

And before a couple of hours had elapsed, he had hired the most discordant barrel organ that the manufacturers of Batignolles could supply, and conveyed it triumphantly to his bed-room. The first note of a sonata of Beethoven was the signal for him to begin, and then ensued the most horrible cacophony imaginable, Arnal working away like a born Savoyard at the overture of ‘la Caravane;’ a few minutes settled the matter, the pianist closing his instrument in despair, and the battle ceasing ‘faute de combattants.’ The truce, however, was not destined to last long; on the following morning, profiting by the actor’s absence at rehearsal, his neighbour unsuspectingly resumed his sonata, only to be interrupted anew by the terrible ‘Caravane,’ for which purpose a *commissionnaire* had been especially retained at the rate of fifteen *sous* an hour, with

strict injunctions to go on turning until ordered to stop. This finally brought the pianist to his senses ; and on the same evening, terms of peace having been agreed upon by the contending parties, the barrel organ, henceforth unnecessary, was duly deposited in a *fiacre*, and re-transported to its native Batignolles.

Besides the 'Epistle to Bouffé,' already mentioned, Arnal published somewhere about 1860 a volume entitled 'Boutader,' consisting chiefly of short pieces in verse, a few of which were suppressed in a second edition. One of the latter, addressed to Madame Stoltz, who had presented the author with a Bologna sausage, terminates as follows :—

'Je l'ai déjà goûté, je l'ai trouvé fort bon.
J'ose vous affirmer d'avance
Que pour vous ma reconnaissance
Durera plus longtemps que votre saucisson.'

The most pleasing specimen, however, of the writer's poetical talent that I have met with, is the subjoined 'little moral tale' which my readers will hardly quarrel with me for inserting as a fitting and agreeable conclusion to the present paper :—

'Un jour, au sortir d'une école,
J'aperçois un enfant qui crie et se désole.
Je m'approche de lui—" Mon ami, qu'avez-vous ? "
" Ah ! j'ai l'âme bien chagrinée,"
Me dit-il ; " j'ai perdu la pièce de dix sous
Que ma mère m'avait donnée."
" Cessez, mon bon ami, de vous désespérer,
C'est un petit malheur facile à réparer ;
Tenez, voici pour vous une semblable pièce."
L'enfant sourit d'abord, puis reprend sa tristesse ;
" Eh bien ! qu'avez-vous donc ? encore du chagrin ? "
" Eh ! mais, monsieur," dit-il, " voici pourquoi je pleure,
Si je n'avais pas tout à l'heure
Perdu dix sous, j'en aurais vingt ! "'

CHARLES HERVEY.

The Game of Pall Mall.

AMONG the many things this country has owed to her lively neighbour across the Channel, undoubtedly one was the game of Pall Mall. While in England no trace of the pastime can be found till about the seventeenth century, we know it flourished in France at least as early as the thirteenth. Those who like to begin at the very beginning in such a matter as this tell us that Languedoc was the birth-place of the game, where, according to Ducange, it was called 'Chicane,' though the other provinces, in adopting the pastime, dropped this name and gave it that of 'Le Jeu de Mail,' under which, some centuries afterwards, it crossed the Channel, and became so fashionable in the England of the Stuart Kings.

The earliest reference to Pall Mall we have been able to find in this country is in the papers presented to Norfolk, Sussex, and Sir Ralph Sadler, the Commissioners appointed by Elizabeth in 1568, nominally to inquire into the conduct towards his Queen of the Scotch Regent Murray, but in reality to try Mary for complicity in the murder of Darnley.

When, in February 1567, a fortnight after the tragedy in the Kirk o' Field, the Scottish Queen went, by the advice of her Council and physicians, to Seton Castle, she set all the scandal-loving tongues, native and foreign, in her kingdom a-wagging. Sir William Drury, writing to Cecil from St. Andrews, regales the Secretary with some of the absurd stories then current, such as that 'the Queen and Bothwell have been shooting at the butts against Huntly and Seton, for a dinner at Tranent, which the latter had to pay.' A story he afterwards had to contradict, and tell Cecil he 'had been misinformed in regard to the Scottish Queen's proceedings, as she had never stirred from Seton.' The undoubted fact that Mary never 'stirred from Seton,' however, had only this effect, that it transferred the scene of her 'shameful diversions' to the grounds of that house. When George Buchanan appeared as one of the Counsellors before the Commissioners at York, and afterwards at Westminster, he charged his Queen, in the 'Detection' he presented, with going every day into a field near the Castle, accompanied by a great crowd of nobles, to play '*ludos consuetos nec eos plane muliebres*;' and, though he does not tell us what those games of the time, which were not quite

suitable for ladies, were, luckily another document in the proceedings, written in the vernacular, is more explicit. The Earl of Murray's own 'Articles' say that for a 'few dayes aftir the murthir, remaining at Halyrude hous, she [then] past to Seytoun, exercising hir one day richt oppenlie at the fieldis, *with the palmall and goif.*' It is beside our purpose here to show how it has been conclusively proved that these statements are as false as Drury's shooting story: the charge is chiefly interesting to us because it proves that our game was known in Scotland at this time, even though we may not be able to claim for it the full force of Buchanan's language, and say that it was one of the games in popular use then in Scotland.

South of the Tweed, Pall Mall does not appear to have been played for at least thirty years after the sitting of the Westminster Commission. It can hardly have been introduced in 1598, for in that year Sir Robert Dallington, in his 'Method for Travel,' extols its merits, and suggests its introduction in these words: 'Among all the exercises of France, I prefer none before the Paile Maille, both because it is a gentlemanlike sport, not violent, and yields good occasion and opportunity of discourse as they walke from one marke to the other. I marvell among many more apish and foolish toys which we have brought out of France, that we have not brought this sport also into England.'

Whether or not it was owing to the traveller's praises, the game was adopted in England very soon after the publication of Dallington's book. It is one of the 'fair and pleasant field games' that King James I. recommends to Prince Henry in the 'Basilikon Doron;' and though the King himself does not seem to have been a player at the game, we have abundant evidence that it became very popular at Court during the early years of the seventeenth century.

Though Dr. Jeremy Taylor includes Pall Mall among the games that are 'lawful' if played in moderation, and for 'refreshment' only, and not for money, it is very doubtful if he saw it played during the gloomy dozen years before the publication of the 'Ductor Dubitantium;' but, when the 'white rose bloomed again,' among the pastimes that returned in the royal train was Pall Mall. Indeed, the palmy days of the game were from the Restoration to the Revolution. During this quarter-century it was one of the most fashionable of games at Court; at the Restoration Pall Mall, like the King, got its 'own again,' and though, as we shall see, Dr. Chambers is hardly correct in saying, 'it is rather surprising that it should have so entirely gone out, there being no trace of it after the Revolution,' undoubtedly the landing of King William deposed

the game from a pride of place that had no rival among outdoor sports except, perhaps, tennis.

On April 2, 1661, Mr. Secretary Pepys walks 'to St. James's Park, where I saw the Duke of York playing at Pall Mall, the first time I ever saw the sport.' Probably the alley the Duke played on was the new Mall King Charles had, among other improvements in the Park, caused to be made in place of the old Mall that occupied the site of the street now called after it, Pall Mall. Though this avenue does not appear to have been enclosed as a street till about 1690, even in the time of the Commonwealth it began to be built upon, and Charles immediately after his return had a new Mall laid out; which still bears the name then given to it as being the arena of our game.

We find many references to the new Mall and its frequenters in contemporary writers. Pepys, in September 1663, falls agossiping with the keeper of the alley, 'who was sweeping of it; who told me of what the earth is mixed that do floor the Mall, and that over all there is cockle shells powdered, and spread to keep it fast, which, however, in dry weather turns to dust and deadens the ball.'

We see this smoothness of the alley alluded to by the flatterer Waller, when, in his poem on St. James's Park, he describes the Merry Monarch engaged in this favourite game of his:—

Here a well polished mall gives us the joy,
To see our Prince his matchless force employ;
His manly posture and his graceful mien,
Vigour and youth in all his motions seen;
No sooner has he touched the flying ball
But 'tis already more than half the mall,
And such a fury from his arm has got
As from a smoking culverin 'twere shot.

On January 4, 1664, we find the Secretary to the Admiralty again writing about our game. After a visit to the Tennis Court, where the King is playing, and being driven away in disgust with the behaviour of the Courtiers, whose 'open flattery is beastly,' Mr. Secretary quite recovers his spirits at a little scene of a directly opposite nature he witnesses when he walks 'afterwards to St. James's Parke, seeing people play at Pell Mell, when it pleased me mightily to hear a gallant lately come from France swear at one of his companions for suffering his man (a spruce blade) to be so saucy as to strike a ball while his master was playing on the Mall.'

Evelyn, too, speaks of King Charles's fondness for this game; but while we find such ample testimony to its popularity at Court,

there is nothing to show that the game ever became a favourite with the citizens of London generally, or that it was ever played in the provinces, where, however, a game of a ruder kind, but the same in principle, existed as a children's game.

No rules of the game have been preserved, but from contemporary prints and descriptions we can get a good idea of how Pall Mall was played. Cotgrave, in 1611, tells us that 'Palemaille is a game wherein a round box bowle is with a mallet strucke through a high arch of iron (standing at either end of an alley, one), which he that can do at the fewest blowes, or at the number agreed on, winnes.' A similar description is given in a note to a conversation in a very rare book published in 1621, and quoted by Brand in his 'Popular Antiquities,' where a lady says to her companion: 'If we had paile mals, it were good to play in this alley, for it is a reasonable good length, straight and even.' This, along with what we have already seen Waller and Pepys say about the 'well-polished mall,' shows that a prime requisite for the game was evenness of surface in the playground, as is necessary in our own day for Pall Mall's descendant, croquet. Mr. Augustus Hare surely must have overlooked this when, in his recently published 'Walks in London,' he wrote that the name of the street Pall Mall 'is derived from a game still popular in the deserted streets of old, sleepy Italian cities, and deriving its name from *palla*, a ball, and *maglia*, a mallet.' It is difficult to say which is the more unsuitable, the game for the street, however sleepy, or the street for the game. Very probably, however, the game Mr. Hare was thinking of is 'Pallone,' a kind of handball, which the Italians, with the strange perversity that made 'prentices play football in the Strand, may waken up their sleepy streets with now and then.

In a view of the garden and terrace of the Palace of Nanci, which Jacques Callot, the eminent French engraver, dedicated to the Duchess of Lorraine in 1624, we find a representation of a game at Pall Mall. 'The scene of the pastime,' says a writer, describing the engraving in 'Notes and Queries,' 'is a broad straight walk, running between *parterres*, and apparently a hundred feet in length. At either end is erected a single hoop, of width and height seemingly two and a half feet. Several balls are grouped close to one of these hoops, round which stand several players, mallet in hand, while a few feet in front of the other hoop another player is about to deliver a stroke, and is evidently aiming to send his ball up among its companions near the goal opposite him. Mallets, balls, hoops, and players, though on a minute scale, are all so distinctly drawn that no mistake can occur in perceiving

at a glance the action of the performers and the instruments of performance.'

Fortunately, however, we have not to depend upon illustrations for our knowledge of the 'instruments of performance.' A lucky discovery in London brought to light several specimens of both the mallets and balls used in the old game. In January 1854, in the old house, No. 68 Pall Mall, the residence of the late Mr. Vulliamy, and for more than a century in the possession of his family, a parcel of Pall Mall mallets and some balls were found in a lumber room, where they had been carefully packed and laid away. 'They are,' said Mr. Albert Way, F.S.A., 'very probably the only existing reliques of the obsolete game of Pall Mall in this country.'

A pair of the mallets and one of the balls were presented by Mr. G. Vulliamy to the British Museum. The mallet is very like the familiar croquet mallet of our own day, except that the head is slightly curved, and the flat ends are cut obliquely upwards, and strongly hooped with iron. The handle is about three feet eight inches long, and about a foot of the upper part of it is wound round with soft white leather: these little differences showing that the duty of this mallet was to drive a ball farther than the croquet mallet is required to do. The ball is two inches and a half in diameter only, and is made of root of box.

While all the authorities we have noted unite in showing us that the object of the player at Pall Mall was to drive a ball along a specially prepared alley—often lined with boards to prevent the ball from escaping—and through 'the Pass,' or high arch at each end, according to a contemporary print which Charles Knight has reproduced in his 'Pictorial History of England,' instead of the Pass and the 'well polished mall,' the goal must sometimes have been a ring, suspended from an arm projecting from a pole, and hanging at a height of about ten or twelve feet above the ground, which appears to be rather a rough piece of grass. Of course, with an ordinary mallet it would be impossible to send the ball through this ring, and accordingly the implements used seem to have been shaped like golf clubs. This must have been the variety of the game alluded to by an anonymous author in the reign of James I., who tells an anecdote of Prince Henry 'playing at goff—a play not unlike to pale-maille.' This appears to have puzzled Strutt, for, as he says, 'if the definition of pall-mall given by Cotgrave be correct, it will be found to differ materially from golf.' The explanation, however, seems clear enough; there were two kinds of Pall Mall, one a dainty game, the other a rougher pastime, played in the fields on ground whose ups and downs may have been chosen

as an addition to the attractions of the game, just as the 'hazards' of the golfing greens are half the fun in that fine game.

Dr. Chambers, as we have seen, is surprised that such a healthful game, and one of such a social nature, should have gone out so entirely, 'there being no trace of it after the Revolution;' but it is by no means certain that the game has ever been allowed entirely to die out in this kingdom; indeed, there seems to be pretty good evidence that under various names, and in modified forms, a game virtually Pall Mall existed in the country from the date of the last records of the old pastime till croquet took the nation by storm a quarter of a century ago.

Mr. Albert Way has been unable to ascertain exactly at what time Pall Mall ceased to be in vogue, but he has clearly shown from old plates of St. James's Park that the date of the decline was between 1716 and 1724. Among the plates engraved for the 'Britannia Illustrata,' produced in 1716-19, is a picture of St. James's Palace and the Park. 'A brief description notices amongst the attractions of the latter, "un très beau mail," shown in the plate, and occupying the central avenue of the long walk, planted probably under the direction of Le Notre, and still known as "the Mall." It here appears to have been separated from the avenues on either side by a low barricade, upon the rail of which persons are seated; this served doubtless to confine the ball within bounds and keep off intruders.' Two gentlemen are engaged in playing the game with mallets precisely similar to those found in Mr. Vulliamy's house, but, though 'the engravers have not neglected to represent the artificial surface of the "well polished mall,"' they have omitted to put in a 'pass' at either end of the alley.

In 1716, then, we may hold that the game was still played, but when a later representation of the Park appeared in an enlarged edition of this work in 1724, Pall Mall must have either gone greatly out of fashion or perhaps fallen entirely into disuse, for though the Mall is distinctly shown in this 'Nouveau Théâtre de la Grande Bretagne,' in no parts are its occupants Pall Mall players, but all the avenues are given up to the ladies and fashionable loungers who continued up to the beginning of this century to hold the Mall in high favour as a promenade.

The ladies, gaily dressed, the Mall adorn
With various dyes and paint the sunny morn,

says Gay, in his 'Trivia,' about the promenade in his time, while Mr. Hare quotes for us a wail over its departed glories when eclipsed by its rival, Hyde Park, in the early years of this century:

‘Here could be seen in one moving mass, extending the whole length of the Mall, five thousand of the most lovely women in this country of female beauty; all splendidly attired, and accompanied by as many well-dressed men.’

But though in the original Pall Mall, as a mild punster has put it, clubs took the place of mallets, and the new ground of Charles II. knew the old game no more, it seems possible to trace the pastime under other names up till the present time. Strutt, in his article on ‘Ring-ball,’ shows that in the seventeenth century that game, then a children’s amusement, ‘consisted in striking a ball with a bandy through a ring fastened into the ground. A similar kind of pastime, I am informed, exists to this day in the north of England; it is played in a ground or alley appropriated to the purpose, and a ball is to be driven from one end of it to the other with a mallet . . . towards an arch of iron, through which it is necessary for the ball to be passed.’ This brings the pastime into this century, but for the next trace of the game we must cross St. George’s Channel. According to a writer in the new edition of the ‘*Encyclopædia Britannica*’ (1877), Mr. Dickson, an ivory turner of Gracechurch Street, London, remembers having made a set of croquet implements for Ireland over forty years ago. This is a faint enough proof of its existence in perhaps more than an isolated case, but in 1852, as most croquet players know, the courtly old pastime was brought back again into the country from the South of France by a young Irish lady, under whose auspices it was played on a lawn at the late Lord Lonsdale’s seat in Ireland. Four years afterwards a well-known purveyor of pastime requisites saw the game in the sister isle, and began to manufacture croquet implements in England. Almost at once the game began a new lease of wonderful popularity, but now it seems as if it were destined to obey that law in the life of most contrivances, and drop into disuse just as it has attained perfection.

R. R. MACGREGOR.

My First Recordership.

BY JAMES PAYN.

THE 'proudest moment of one's life' is a moot point with most people, though they have no hesitation in declaring any moment of it to be so, when they wish to flatter their audience. Man—vain man—lies, indeed, more shamelessly 'in this connection,' as the Yankees term it, than probably in any other. A few of his fellow-creatures have only to drink his health after dinner to persuade him to pronounce the formula with every appearance of genuineness and much emotion. It is fair to state, however, that he may occasionally tell the truth, for honours sometimes fall to us in their proper order, and on each occasion we may justly say that 'this is the proudest,' &c., though it may be wiped out on the morrow by a still greater exaltation. One or two great distinctions have been conferred upon me, during a long and meritorious life, which stand out from all others like landmarks: occasions when my affairs seemed, indeed, at high tide, and I was being carried at the top of the wave of public approval on to fortune—only somehow it always ebbed again and left me stranded.

As a general rule, I was not fortunate at my various seminaries in the way of getting 'exhibitions,' scholarships, and the like gross material prizes. But I once came home from a dame's school with an embossed card (with a lace edging entwined with blue silk) on which I was described as having halved the prize for good conduct during the current quarter with another boy. There were only three other boys beside myself, the rest being girls; but still it was a moral distinction; and as my mother clasped me to her bosom and promised me five shillings, out of my own money-box, to spend as I pleased, I felt a certain sublime consciousness of personal desert which has never since wholly deserted me. Only I have often wished there were more prizes in the world for well-doing—or fewer boys.

Years rolled on—more than twenty years—before any such gratifying mark of public approval was again conferred upon me. I was a struggling barrister—more so, in fact, than most young barristers, for I had married early, and had two or three struggling children—and I eked out a precarious professional existence by literature for the periodicals. The literature, to say truth, was light, and the periodicals were comic. I was not serious-minded. I fear, in any way, except when the butcher or the baker made

me so, by their pressing attentions; and yet one day I was called upon by the curate of the parish 'and another' (to use a somewhat professional term), to ask me as a favour 'to represent the lay element of the district in Convocation.' What earthly—and still more what other—power could have moved them to take that step is to this moment shrouded in mystery. Good-natured friends have always represented them as having been the victims of some practical joke; but this idea is revolting to me. I prefer to think that they saw (or thought they saw), beneath the sparkling current of my (apparently) ephemeral productions, a deep, clear stream of theological thought. 'This,' said they to themselves, 'is the right man for our great purpose: the very frivolity of his literary style will popularise the ecclesiastical aims we have in view; and, beholding him on the side of the good cause, the most thoughtless will be won over to acknowledge that there must be really something in it.' It may be said that this explanation is far-fetched; but so also, surely, was those gentlemen's proposed representative. If they had gone, indeed, to the very ends of the earth to seek out a person as little fitted as possible to represent the lay element of our parish (or any other) in Convocation, they could hardly have been more successful than they had been in pitching upon me. I thought about it very seriously. If the matter would have only taken twenty-four hours I might perhaps have acceded to their wishes: for new forms of human life were always welcome to me, and I generally contrived to make something out of them; but the time that my attendance would be required at this theological council seemed somewhat indefinite; so I was compelled (from motives of economy) to decline the proffered honour. Still, to have had the option was really the proudest—and most amazing—moment of my life, and so I told them.

Years again rolled on: I had thrown away the crutch of literature, and was making considerable way on my own legs in the legitimate pursuit of my profession. Still, it was indeed an unlooked-for stroke of good fortune that caused me to wake one morning Recorder of Brettleborough. When my wife (who has a playful habit of opening any letters that may come for me in a strange hand) informed me that that greatness had been conferred upon me, I could hardly believe my ears.

'You must be mad, my dear,' said I, rather rudely.

'Nay,' said she, 'here it is in black and white; though whether Brettleborough may not be mad to offer it you is an open question.'

The reply was cynical, but in the main correct: I had really been offered the Recordership of that ancient borough, and I took it, as the gladsome trout (speckled enthusiast!) is wont to take the

may-fly. Some people, I knew, addressed a Recorder when on the Bench as 'your Worship,' but others as 'my Lord.' The latter are the less numerous, perhaps: people are rather shy of showing the proper respect to that peculiar judicial position; 'but if they do—by Jingo, if they do,' thought I, 'it will certainly be the proudest moment of my life.' The emolument was small; but what was emolument in comparison with such an ecstatic contingency? My family were exceedingly anxious to know whether Papa 'would have to sentence people to death or not,' and seemed to be much disappointed when he replied in the negative. The great question in my own mind was whether it would be necessary to purchase a new wig. I am still doubtful on the matter, technically; but, resolving that Justice should lose nothing of her majesty in my humble person, I bought one. Now that I have reached a far higher goal I may frankly confess that, in order to fit myself for that first Recordership, I practised trying criminals for various grave but fictitious offences in my own library, and dismissed them to various terms of imprisonment and penal servitude in very moving terms, to the great satisfaction, and, I hope, the moral improvement, of my children and domestics. On the under-housemaid, however, being overheard to observe that it was 'as good as a stage play,' her mistress would have dismissed her on the spot but for my own recommendation to mercy on account of her youth—and, as I am sorry to say my wife scornfully added, her attractive appearance.

Brettlesborough is not a large town; indeed, it is generally spoken of, to express its locality, as 'near Cliffport,' a well-known watering-place on the North-East coast. The scenery is described in the local guide-books as being of 'rugged grandeur.' There are none of those obstructions to light and air called trees in the neighbourhood, and the climate is bracing; the wind there is said, indeed, by hostile critics to be 'enough to cut your nose off,' and it takes two men to shut a gate. There is, however, excellent snipe-shooting to be obtained by those who know where to find the snipes, and how to shoot them.

I went down two days before my winter assize commenced in order to enjoy this pastime, to which I am especially devoted. It gives me more exercise than any other description of sport, and affords much opportunity for the practice of the sublime virtues of hope and patience, and for the repression of the wildest (but very natural) forms of strong language.

On arriving at the hotel, my first inquiry was for a guide to the snipes; and after some hesitation (the meaning of which I was at a loss to understand) the landlord produced one. His name

was Bob Trivet, and he looked as right as his name for the purpose I had in view ; a weather-worn, wiry little fellow, with a keen eye, leather gaiters, and a moleskin cap ; a sportsman every inch of him, and of course a native of the place and conversant with it. I learnt a great deal about Brettlesborough from him in a casual way, for it is my weakness to be somewhat familiar with my companion when in pursuit of game, no matter what may be the social inequality of our relative positions ; and in fact in those forty-eight hours we became quite cronies. At the end of the second day I was so pleased with him that I resolved, after my official duties were over, to have a day's wildfowl shooting with him on the coast, of which sport he had spoken to me in high terms.

'I suppose,' said I, 'one can get a boat at Cliffport?'

'Well, my lord'—I forgot to say that he always called me 'my lord,' for which I did not feel called upon to reprove him ; for if an error, it was one, so to speak, upon the right side, and showed his respect for the Law in the person of its administrator—'Well, my lord, as to that, there are boats at Brettlesborough ; in fact, I have a very good fowling boat myself.'

'Very good, Trivet, I will have that, and we will go out together.'

'Well, my lord, I hope it may be so.' Here he took off his moleskin cap and scratched his head. 'I am sure I shall be very pleased—*very* pleased—if only I ain't up yonder.'

'Up yonder? What *do* you mean?'

He was pointing to a castellated mansion of red brick—by far the most ambitious-looking dwelling-house in the neighbourhood—but it was the county gaol.

'Well, my lord, I may be in the Jug. I'm out on bail, you see, just now—for manslaughter ; but as your lordship will try the case yourself—'

I don't know what he added—my whole mind was in such a state of turmoil and indignation—but I caught the word 'square' distinctly.

I turned my back on him sharply, walked hastily back to the hotel, and summoned the landlord.

'So, sir,' said I, 'you have thought proper to recommend to me—Her Majesty's representative in this place—a felon, or at least a possible felon, as a sporting companion!'

'Well, your worship, I confess I did have my doubts ; but, you see, you was so strong about the man knowing where the snipes was to be found, and nobody ever did know hereabouts, except Trivet and Dick Williams—'

'Then why did you not give me Dick Williams?'

'Well, your worship, he be dead : it is him as Bob have shot ; though I am sure it was only an accident. They was out on the marshes together, and——'

'Not another word,' said I. 'If this matter, as I understand, is to come before me in my judicial capacity to-morrow, I must not hear a syllable of it. But in the mean time—good Heavens !—what must everybody in the place have thought ?'

'Well, sir, they as didn't know how it was—how you was doing it, I mean, in ignorance—they thought it was very kind and affable of your worship, and they hope you'll let Bob off. For Dick was a gamekeeper, you see ; and Bob being given to poaching from his youth up, there was every likelihoods of their having fallen out in a natural way and without malice——'

'Begone,' I cried, 'begone !' And, alarmed by my 'sententious' manner as well as words, the landlord fled from my presence.

Never, since the foundation of the British Law, I suppose, was any judicial functionary placed in so false a position as the Recorder of Brettleborough on that occasion.

The man was tried before me the next morning. I protest I felt like the Industrious Apprentice in Hogarth, before whom his idle companion comes up for judgment ; and unfortunately everybody in court seemed aware of our previous relations. The counsel for the defence spoke of that 'love of sport common to all classes of Englishmen, from the lowest to the highest ;' and when he said 'lowest' he looked at the prisoner, and when he said 'highest' he glanced up at me. It was altogether a most embarrassing position for any Recorder.

The case was rather a strong one against my late friend ; but the jury acquitted him, of which I was sincerely glad. Only that very evening, to my intense annoyance, Bob Trivet called at the hotel to express his gratitude to me in person 'for letting him off,' as he expressed it, as if he had been a gun of which I had pulled the trigger. In vain I told him that I had nothing to do with it, and that he should rather thank the jury who had taken so merciful a view of his case. He evidently thought that in my delicacy of mind I chose to make light of my own efforts for his deliverance. The landlord shared this conviction, and exhibited his sense of my having thus stuck to a friend in an ugly pinch by various approving nods and gestures as he waited at table.

Upon the whole, I have reason to believe that I made a very favourable impression at Brettleborough during my first session as its Recorder, but it must be confessed not altogether in the manner I had designed.

Rondeau.

If love be true—not bought at mart—
 Though night and darkness hide from view,
 What harshest of harsh things can part
 The loved-one from the lover's heart,
 Or stay the dreams that flit thereto?
 If love be true, dreams need no chart
 To gain the goal to which they're due;
 For Love will guide them with love's dart,
 If love be true.

If love be true, if thou be true,
 Sweet love, as fair thou surely art,
 Night shall not hide your eyes of blue
 From my heart's eyes the long night through;
 Tho' in sweet sadness tears may start,
 If love be true.

S. WADDINGTON.

The Elba of the Thames.

It was about the middle of last December—I cannot recollect the exact date—that I was sitting one evening in my little writing room before a dull fire enjoying epicurean brief dozes and brief epicurean dips into Mr. Frederick Locker's dainty 'London Lyrics,' when our explosive little maid-of-all-work knocked, and, before I could gasp out permission, entered and proclaimed in her usual voice of intense alarm:—

'A gentleman to see you, sir.'

'Did he give any name?'

'Yes, sir, Blacker.'

'Blacker! Blacker!' I muttered somewhat sulkily, 'I don't know anyone of that name. But never mind, Johannah, show him in.'

In a moment the door opened again, and a tall thin man clad in decorous black entered.

'Bracken,' I said, getting up and holding out my hand, 'Bracken, is it you? She told me some man named Blacker wanted to see me. Sit down. How are you?'

He looked at his black clothes with a rueful smile and said in a low voice as he took a chair, 'It wouldn't be easy for her to find any one much blacker than me.' He had carried his hat in with him, and now I noticed its black band.

'I'm sorry to see that band, Bracken,' I said, taking his hat from him, and putting it on a pile of books.

'Yes,' he continued, 'I lost my wife six months ago—'

'Indeed! I am sorry to hear you say so.'

'Thank you, thank you very much, but I did not come to trouble you with my home griefs. I called at your old place at the Inn. They directed me here, and I came as I want once more to consult you about business.'

'I am glad to see you,' I answered, 'no matter what brought you, and I sympathise with you in your loss. But, my dear Bracken, before you go any further I must tell you that I have no exceptional skill in such matters, and I don't think you will serve your case in the least by confiding it to me. Will you smoke?'

'Thank you, I will. Smoking, they say, injures the scent and the sight, and a detective ought to keep his senses sharp.'

'Ay, Bracken, a detective ought to keep his senses sharp when he is collecting facts or observing disturbances, but as soon as he has collected and observed he should stew the whole in nicotine,

that's my conviction. For my part, I believe the lightning to illumine a mystery will come quickest from a cloud.'

'There is a good deal in what you say,' said the detective thoughtfully; 'and now,' he added, crossing his legs wearily and leaning back in the easy chair, 'let me lay the facts of the present case before you.'

'My dear Bracken,' I said, 'pray don't trouble yourself to do anything of the kind. No doubt in the previous case I did make a fairly good guess, but it was only a guess, and moreover a guess helped by a pregnant fact known only to myself. So that I really don't think there would be the least use in your going on with the case; I am the most incurious of men.'

He did not seem to be much impressed with this speech of mine. He took two or three long quiet puffs at his cigar, and then said slowly, 'No doubt you won by a guess last time, but no matter how far reason or inquiry or facts may carry a man in ordinary cases, in extraordinary cases they are not worth twopence without a good guess. The man who can't guess isn't much use at our business. You may have the strongest lead of facts in the world towards a certain direction, and often it's only a good guess that helps you out of a fatal error to which all the facts seem to point. In the present case there are plenty of facts and no end of guesses possible, but somehow I've missed the right guess up to this, and I am just where I was three weeks ago when the case was first put into my hands. You will hear me and help me if you can?'

Again I protested, but he put the matter in a new light. 'You see I gained a little reputation over that former case, and I have got a few private jobs in consequence. Now this is a private job, and one which I never would have come by only for the other one you assisted me in. You helped me into a little notoriety; will you desert me now? Surely it will do you no harm to hear me read my notes over.'

'Well, Bracken, you seem to have made up your mind that I shall hear, so I dare say there is nothing left for me but to listen. Go on!'

'Thank you,' he cried, with a little smile of triumph, as he drew a battered green pocket-book from his breast and spread it open on the table before him. I observed when he did so that the leaves of the pocket-book were cut down the centre from the stitching to the opposite edge of the parallelogram, so that if one tried to lift a leaf from the side, only half the leaf came up, the other half remaining unmoved. He regarded me with a smile of mild self-deprecation, and explained. 'This is my book for private cases.'

The plan of keeping the book is very simple, and is intended to deceive only a chance finder of the book, should it by any accident get out of my possession into the hands of anyone else. You see this is page 12, divided into two; on the left-hand half are the heads of particulars, such as height, complexion, clothes, weight, and so on; and on the right-hand half are the particulars themselves, only the heads on this sheet have no connection with the detail on the other, and to find the corresponding particulars you have to turn over to the right-hand half of page 15. I keep the particulars three pages after the heads. When I want to see anything I have only to turn back three of the right-hand halves, thus, and read the other left-hand half into these.'

'But how do you manage about pages 1, 2, and 3, and the last three pages?'

'Look. 1, 2, and 3 on the right are filled up with imaginary particulars. At the end the last three right-hand halves are filled up with heads having reference really to no inquiries at all. Of course, if it was any clever man's business to find out how the thing worked, supposing he suspected it was not square, he could do so after a little while. But then there are three chances in my favour as regards a finder; he may not be curious, he may not suspect, and he may not be clever.'

'Ingenious, Bracken, ingenious,' I said. 'And now, if I am to hear about this puzzle, let us get on.'

'With pleasure. I am only too anxious to begin.' The substance of Bracken's statement was as follows:—

Mr. William Jordan, of Blank Street, Chelsea, is a man who some years ago retired from business on account of failing health. His wife is alive, and four weeks ago his son was living with the father and mother. For nearly four weeks the son has not been seen by anyone known to father or mother, and the object of the present inquiry is to clear up the fate of that son, whose name is Edward.

The absconder is in his twentieth year, five feet six, broad-shouldered, brown-haired, brown-eyed, sallow in complexion, with pale thick lips, Roman nose, and strongly marked eyebrows meeting over the nose. Wears no hair on his face, and will be easily identified by a deep cut in the cheek on the left side close to the nostril; this gash having been received five years ago from the bursting of a large toy cannon, made by the missing lad out of an inch gas-pipe. On the day of his disappearance he was dressed in a light grey pepper-and-salt tweed suit, wore a silk hat and button boots.

His father lives comfortably, and would have been able to purchase a partnership for his son as soon as the latter came to a

fitting age. Two years ago the absconder had been placed in the counting-house of the establishment in which his father had passed his life. The lad had the complete confidence of the partners, and was, in fact, treated more as if he were an apprenticed partner than an ordinary office clerk, although he occupied the nominal position of junior clerk, and had the weekly salary of a guinea.

On November 17, at half-past eleven o'clock, he was handed an open cheque for five thousand pounds, instructed to draw the sum out of the firm's bank and pay the five thousand pounds in Bank of England notes into the Custom House, the sum being duty on imported goods. The bank lay north of his office, the Custom House south, and in going from the bank to the Custom House he would have to pass by his place of business. The forenoon was fine, and when he went to the bank he did not put on his overcoat, but left it hanging up in its usual place in the front office behind the door, just by the copying press. He cashed the cheque, taking for it fifty one-hundred-pound notes, and came into the office for his overcoat on his way from the bank to the Custom House. He left his own office at about noon, and as Custom House business such as he was upon took about two hours, he was not expected back until two in the afternoon. At half-past three P.M. he had not returned, and the clerks and partners became uneasy, fearing some accident had befallen him. They sent in haste a messenger to the Custom House, and ascertained that, although he had been seen there, he had paid no money that day. The clerk who had been despatched to make inquiries was a staunch friend of young Edward Jordan, and received a great shock upon finding that the lad had not paid in the money. He took a cab back to the office, and, on his arrival there, commenced a search in the hope of discovering some explanation of Jordan's extraordinary conduct. He found nothing. At length he felt that in duty to the firm he could no longer hold back the alarming facts, so he went into the inner office and communicated them to the partners. They directed him to go at once to Blank Street, Chelsea, and ascertain if anything had been heard of young Jordan there. The clerk went into the back office for his overcoat, which hung on the same peg as Jordan's had earlier in the day, put on his coat, noticed something unusual in the breast pocket, thrust in his hand, and drew out young Jordan's large pocket-book. Carrying this in his hand, he went into the front office and placed the book before the partners, explaining the way in which he had come by it. Under the circumstances, there was no delicacy about opening it; and upon examination, they found the fifty one-

hundred-pound notes in it, just as they were when he got them from the bank.

'The two coats hung on the one peg. When he came back from the bank for his overcoat, he must have taken the pocket-book out of his small coat pocket and dropped it into the breast pocket of my overcoat, mistaking mine for his,' said the clerk.

Here Bracken paused for a moment, hunted in a small portfolio he carried, and fished up a dirty half-sheet of note paper. The business house received the following note next morning:—

'Gentlemen,—I lost the five thousand pounds on my way from the bank to the Custom House. I do not expect you to believe me. Nothing will clear me of this. Even supposing you would take my word for it that I didn't steal the money, I could never face you, on account of the great loss and trouble my carelessness has brought upon you. You need not hope to find me. I shall not see you again in this life; but if there is justice beyond the grave, you shall know I did no wilful wrong to you.

'EDWARD JORDAN.'

Bracken folded up the letter and returned it to his portfolio. 'The day after that,' continued Bracken, 'Mr. William Jordan, the father of the unlucky youth, called me in, and instructed me to find his son. I am to have fifty pounds and all expenses paid, if I succeed. You will help me, will you not?'

'Candidly, Bracken, your case doesn't interest me in the least. It is singularly commonplace, and affords no scope to the imagination. I beg of you not to expect me to do any thing in it. I feel certain I never can warm to the fate of that injudicious boy. Claret or port? Claret. All right. Now tell me a story. Shut up that cold-blooded-looking note-book and tell me a story.'

He shut up the note-book at once and thrust it into his breast pocket. 'Well,' he said, 'suppose we don't treat it as business, but simply as a tale; may I tell you what I have been able to collect about this case in my off-time during the past three weeks?'

'Now you are reasonable. Have a light and go on.'

'I will not bother you with detail, but give you results:—At half-past three on the afternoon of November 17, young Jordan called at his residence in Blank Street, Chelsea. There was no one in but the housemaid. Young Jordan admitted himself with his latch-key, and went straight to his own room. The girl saw him come up the street steps, and heard him go up to his own room on the second floor. After a quarter of an hour he rang his bell. She went up. He asked if his father or mother were in, and she answered, No; that they had gone for a drive to Hammersmith, that they purposed calling to see some friends, and returning by Regent Street, where Mrs. Jordan wanted to make

some purchases, and that they were not to be back until after six. He then asked if she had any money for housekeeping, and she said No, but that one pound six had been left for the milkman. He told her to hand him this, gave her an I O U, and taking with him a mackintosh in addition to his overcoat which he had not removed, went out without saying another word. Upon a close search it was found that he had carried with him nothing else but about eight yards of inch rope, which had been used for cording a heavy package. As he borrowed no money of any one else, and was known on the morning to have had only about twenty shillings in his possession, his whole stock-in-trade of money must have been under two pounds ten. He never wore or possessed rings, scarf-pins, or jewelry of any kind, and the only thing which he owned of value has been found—his watch.'

'Where was the watch found?' I asked. One thing, and only one thing, had up to this aroused my interest. What could he have wanted with eight yards of rope? It would make a large parcel, and be of little intrinsic value.

'The watch was found under peculiar circumstances, which I am coming to. Let me keep my own line, and we shall get done the sooner. After leaving Blank Street, he went into the street leading from it to the Chelsea Steamboat Pier, and in that street at a plumber's bought a narrow strip of sheet lead, six inches wide and weighing four pounds. This was rolled up and wrapped in brown paper. The man who sold it asked if he might send it, but young Jordan said he would carry it himself.'

'Have you found either the cord or the lead, Bracken?'

'No, nor any clue to either. Well, he took the penny boat at Chelsea and got out at Lambeth. At Lambeth he borrowed a pair-oar rowing boat, deposited five shillings, and, saying he was going a bit down the river, pulled out into mid-stream, and then quickly in the direction of Westminster. The man from whom he hired the boat at Lambeth knew young Jordan very well, as he was a frequent customer, and made no difficulty about lending him the craft, although it was then five o'clock and nearly dark. The lad was a good oarsman and very fond of boating.'

'On the seventeenth of November,' I said, referring to 'Whitaker,' 'it was high water at fifteen minutes past two in the afternoon, so that at five it was about half ebb.'

'Yes, about half ebb, with a strong fresh running down. About half-past five he landed at London Bridge, Surrey side, left the boat in charge of a man, went up the steps and into three shops, and bought a large quantity of provisions.'

'Eh?'

'A quantity of cooked beef and ham, and hard boiled eggs and bread, and sausages, and biscuits, and cheese, and a pork pie.'

'Come, come, Bracken! What does a man bent on suicide want with such things? Are you quite sure you are right, and that it was the same man?'

'Nothing in this world is surer. You see, the mark on the cheek is conclusive. Besides, the man who took charge of the boat while he was buying the things not only identified him but the boat as well,' answered Bracken, with the air of a man who had needless explanation imposed upon him.

'And did the Lambeth man see the mackintosh?'

'Yes, and said it was not neatly folded, but roughly, and that the rope might be wrapped up in it.'

'Well, go on.'

'Here is a complete list of the things he bought at London Bridge. Look at it.'

I did so, but saw nothing particular or noteworthy in it. For a while, after hearing of the lead, I thought he had meant to drown himself. Up to the London Bridge episode it seemed to be a natural conclusion that he had brought the line and the lead and hired the boat with a view to drowning himself in deep water down the river, and, using the line and the lead as a sinker, to insure himself against chance of changing his mind with result once he threw himself from the boat, and to insure the concealment of his body for a considerable time afterwards.

Bracken's history was nearly done. It concluded thus:—

'From the hour he got into that boat at London Bridge until now no one has seen him. On the morning of the eighteenth at eight o'clock, in a fog, the boat half full of water was found jammed between the bows of two barges moored at the Tower. On baling out the water his watch was found under the stern sheet, stopped at six o'clock, so that if the watch stopped at the same time as he left the boat he must have either been drowned or come ashore half an hour after leaving London Bridge, and I am perfectly satisfied he did not come ashore there and then or at any subsequent time.'

'So that you are left without any hypothesis but the one of suicide?'

'I don't see my way to any thing else,' muttered Bracken, ruefully.

'But,' I objected, 'a person about to commit suicide doesn't usually buy cold beef and pork pies?'

'No,' assented the detective; 'that's what staggers me; but in addition to all I have told you I may say that I have made most

exhaustive inquiries, and that I am fully certain he did not land on either bank that night, and that neither then nor since has his body been found, nor anything which could lead one to suppose he has committed suicide. Now, what can you make of a man who left an open boat with a mackintosh coat, a parcel of food, a rope and a piece of lead at six on a November evening of the day on which he thought it might have been supposed he had stolen five thousand pounds, and who did not land and did not commit suicide?’

‘I confess, Bracken, that at last I am interested, and that I am quite as much at a loss to account for his disappearance as you are. Do you assure me that all the things you have told me are trustworthy facts?’

‘You may build the whole case on them,’ answered the detective confidently.

‘That he did not land that night?’

‘As surely as you sit in that chair, he did not.’

‘That his body is not now lying in the mud?’

‘I think that is equally certain. His hat at least would have been found.’

‘And that he left the boat at about six on the evening of his disappearance?’

‘Nothing can be surer than that,’ replied Bracken, knitting his brows and lighting another cigar.

‘What makes you so sure of the last?’

‘Why, the watch, of course. Didn’t I tell you that it was found under the stern sheet, stopped at 6 P.M.?’

‘You didn’t say anything about 6 P.M. before. Tell me, was the chain found with the watch?’

‘Yes, just as if it had fallen out of his pocket as he stooped forward.’

‘But, Bracken, watches don’t fall out of men’s pockets, and the chains don’t get loose when men stoop down. You might stand on your head for a while before your watch would fall out, and you might dance on your head for a year before the ordinary chain would free itself from the waistcoat button-hole. What kind of a chain was it?’

‘Here are the watch and the chain,’ answered the detective, taking both out of a capacious pocket in the inner side of his coat.

I examined the watch and the chain. The watch was a plain gold English lever, with an ordinary gold Albert chain, to the end of which was fixed a long seal. ‘Now, Bracken, how in the name of wonder could that seal come through a waistcoat button-hole

unless it were helped? And in any case how could it get under the stern sheet?’

‘I admit the difficulty about the seal getting through the button-hole, but I forgot to say that the stern sheet was washing about when the boat was found. She was, as I told you, half full of water, and the stern sheet had got adrift.’

‘And that would mean that the watch had found its way there *after* the boat became partly full of water, *or*, Bracken—’ I paused.

‘Or that it was placed there before the boat began to fill.’ Bracken finished my sentence.

‘Exactly.’ I held the watch in my hand close under my reading lamp. ‘This watch would not be of any use to him. He could not with safety either sell or pawn it, as it happens to have his name scratched deeply on the inner case. It was of no use to him whatever so long as he kept it in his pocket. I conclude that he left it in the boat deliberately, and that its presence in the boat was intended to mislead.’

‘But in what way do you think its presence was intended to mislead?’

‘That’s my difficulty now, as it is yours. Do you know anything further of this watch?’

‘No, except that the poor old father told me he had made the missing lad a present of it on his nineteenth birthday.’

‘Well, Bracken, I don’t see how that fact can help us. Anything further?’

‘That his father at the same time bought for himself a watch precisely similar, that they often had a little joke about the economy of such an arrangement, as the one key did for both, and that on the night before the lad’s disappearance this little joke had cropped up, when the son asked the father for a loan of his key to wind this one.’

‘So that the lad had no key of his own, but borrowed his father’s, on the night of the sixteenth?’

‘Yes.’

‘About what o’clock was that?’

‘Close to midnight, when the old gentleman was going to bed.’

‘I don’t think that helps us much either. Wait a bit. It may. Let me think half a moment. Has this watch been in any way tampered with since it was found?’

‘Not in the least. The man at the Lambeth Wharf gave it to me, and said it had not been touched. It was he himself who found it on baling out the boat.’

‘Bracken, let us try an experiment. I have an idea.’

‘With all my heart,’ cried the detective joyously.

I took out my own watch, one not very unlike young Jordan’s. ‘Now, Bracken,’ said I, ‘my watch was wound at an hour last night about corresponding with the time the lad’s watch was wound that night, namely, near midnight. It is now, as you see, half-past eight by my watch, and six by his. If I take off the fly wheel, my watch rushes down. Look,’ said I, holding the dial upward as the hands sped quickly over the face. ‘You see the hands have covered twelve hours. They have stopped at 8.30. This means that my watch would have gone until about that time to-morrow morning without winding to-night. Young Jordan’s watch won’t go for merely removing the escapement. We must take away more. See, at last it begins to move, but how languidly! Why, it’s stopped! Won’t stir another cog. And yet it has only moved the hands two hours! Now, Bracken, have we not made a little discovery?’

‘Yes,’ answered the detective, taking the absconder’s watch out of my hand and trying vainly to make the wheels resume their motion.

‘Bracken, there was no accident in his leaving his watch behind him in the boat; there was design. He wished the finder and all concerned in his history to believe that he abandoned the boat within half an hour of quitting London Bridge, whereas he must have been in that boat or had access to it long after, about twelve hours later, at the very least.’

‘That doesn’t seem to throw much light on the affair,’ rejoined he, gloomily. ‘Of course his object in doing this is clear. He wanted to mislead people as to the whereabouts of his getting out. But what I can’t understand is this, that he should openly buy food and yet take such care to persuade everyone he had committed suicide. What do you make out of that inconsistency?’

‘Well, I don’t quite know yet. But one thing is clear, that although you had the clue afforded by his buying food, you have not been able to trace him. He may not, in his hurry, have thought you or anyone could pick up the pork-pie clue. Or at the last minute he may have recollected the pork-pie clue, and conceived the idea of adding to his security by aiding the suspicion of drowning with the watch device. Any way, Bracken, one thing is plain: he has a very secure hiding-place above the Tower.’

‘Above the Tower?’ said he carefully, as if indisposed to admit anything not fully proved.

‘Yes, you may take it for certain above the Tower. It was high water that morning at forty minutes past one; considering the

volume of fresh in the river, the ebb would run down until after eight. The boat was found near the Tower at eight o'clock; he was in the boat or had access to it at six; at six or at some period subsequent to it, he must have cast off or abandoned the boat, or left it where it was found. It is exceedingly unlikely that, after passing fourteen hours in a boat, he retained any taste for unnecessary pulling, so that I think we are quite safe in assuming he abandoned the boat somewhere above the Tower, and at some minute between six and eight o'clock on the morning of the eighteenth.'

'You *have* narrowed it down. We have now only to look up those two hours,' said he, beginning to get excited.

'Now, Bracken, tell me what you have done, and be as brief as you can.'

'You see, the lad's father told me all expenses would be paid, so I thought I'd make as complete an investigation as possible, and I have done so. I put five other men on, and through them I am, as I told you before, quite certain the boat did not touch the shore that night after leaving London Bridge. I'll tell you how I am so sure——'

'No,' I interrupted, 'there is no occasion for that; you know your business thoroughly. In all matters of that kind I follow you blindly.'

He bowed and smiled. 'I am also convinced that he did not drown himself.' I motioned him to proceed. 'And I found out that he did not take shelter in any other craft afloat.'

'Now *you* have narrowed it down a good deal. Neither his father nor mother is amphibious?' I asked solemnly.

'No, I think not,' answered the detective gravely. He was too much interested and excited even to suspect a jest.

'My reading of the case so far is this,' I said, pushing the jug to Bracken, whose forehead was damp with thought and perplexity. 'Edward Jordan is not an ordinary young man, and is in no ordinary hiding place——'

'You may take your oath about the hiding place!' cried my visitor resentfully.

'The rope, the provisions, the lead, the watch, all go to prove he had some fully matured plan of concealment. There was no wild rushing off to the nearest railway station, no foolish notion that a garret could hide him. He is a lad of imagination and resource, and being no criminal, haunted by no terrible consciousness of evil done, but being goaded and stimulated by the dread of unmerited disgrace, he had the use of, and did use, all his resources to ensure his success. I think if we had an opportunity of

asking, we should find the lad had a romantic imagination and a taste for adventure.'

'His mother said that the only trouble they had with him when he was young was the dread that he would run away to sea.'

'Very good. Now, he wanted that lead and that rope for some purpose; and until we can find out what purpose of concealment that lead and that rope could be made to serve, we shall make no progress. I take another view, now that I have thought a little more of his buying the lead and the provisions so openly as he did—hiring the boat of a man who knew him also confirms my present idea. He was quite confident, at the time he made these preparations, that his hiding place was practically undiscoverable. Sending the watch adrift was an after-thought, one adopted at the last moment. It was quite superfluous to his scheme. I don't think we can do any thing further about it to-night. I'd like to go from the Tower to Chelsea by water before trying to advance another step. Meet me at King William's Statue to-morrow at eleven o'clock, and we'll get to the Tower and go to Chelsea by water.'

After a few minutes Bracken withdrew, and I smoked a final pipe over the 'Occasional Notes' of the 'Pall Mall.'

It was a clear bright day with chill sunshine and a searching nor'-east wind, when Bracken and I stepped on board the steam-boat at the Tower. In a minute we were running up against a stiff ebb tide. This suited us well, as our progress was slower than if the tide had been with us, and we wanted as much time as possible for looking round. We went into the bow of the boat, and scrutinised every object in the river with the utmost care. I had brought my binocular with me, and although I found the vibration and forward motion impeded its use very considerably, I caught sharp glimpses at most of the prominent objects on the way.

'You will ask me for the glass if you want it,' I said to Bracken. 'My sight is not very long, and the glass helps me materially.'

'Thank you, I will,' he replied. 'My sight is excellent, and I don't think I shall need the glass for anything here.'

I could see that my companion took much more interest in my examination than his own. He evidently regarded this trial as the very last likely to yield good result. He told me he had often been up and down the river since he got charge of this case, and had examined most minutely every usual and unusual appearance without gleaning a single hint.

We passed London, Southwark, Blackfriars, Waterloo, Westminster, Lambeth, and Vauxhall bridges, still nothing attracted

my attention. A little farther on, I felt myself start. Bracken, whose eyes were never off me, demanded quickly :

‘What is it?’

‘Not much,’ I said, ‘so far. Wait a bit. Do you know,’ I asked, keeping my eyes at the glass and pointing it dead ahead as we approached the beautiful Chelsea Suspension Bridge, ‘if young Jordan was strong in the arms?’

‘I do not,’ he said. ‘Why?’

‘Never mind why for a moment.’ I dropped the glass. I walked aft and asked the man who worked the funnel, ‘How’s the tide now?’

‘Ebb,’ he answered.

‘How much?’

‘About half.’

‘And a tide full at one in the afternoon would be how much higher than the water is now?’

‘Six or seven feet.’

I thanked the man and went forward with Bracken again, just as we passed under Chelsea Suspension Bridge.

I turned to the eager-eyed detective beside me, and asked quickly, ‘Are you fond of birds?’

‘Yes.’

‘Are those sparrows in our wake?’

‘Yes, four sparrows.’

‘Could you tell me if London sparrows are very hard pressed at this time?’

‘No. Not particularly. The nor-easter has hardened up the ground a little, no doubt; but I don’t think the birds are very badly off just now. What makes you so curious about the birds?’

I did not reply to his question. I waived it from me and continued, ‘This young Jordan could, supposing he wished it, throw four pounds of sheet lead, rolled up tight, twenty feet high?’

‘That’s not quite certain, but I think he could.’

‘At all events, if it were tied at the end of a rope, he could swing it, or cast it, or sling it twenty feet high?’

‘Yes; I think that is certain.’

‘And sparrows are not starving now?’

‘No. Do tell me what you are thinking?’

‘Well,’ said I, shutting up my binocular, ‘I am thinking you were quite right in all you concluded from the facts you accumulated. I don’t think young Jordan ever touched the shore since he left London Bridge on the seventeenth of last month. I don’t think he drowned himself. And now, Bracken, I’ll tell you what

I am thinking, since the sparrows *are not* very badly off, I am thinking young Jordan *is*. I am thinking he is dead.'

'Dead!' cried Bracken, seizing my hand. 'What makes you fancy that? I know you must have good reason for what you say.' His face was close to mine, and I could see in his eyes, mixed with human sorrow for the poor lad, a profound professional curiosity.

'Wait a while. I want to think what is best to be done. I am not much good at athletics, are you?'

'Well, nothing wonderful; but of course I am a bit of an athlete. What is to be done?'

'Can you go down a rope, say twenty feet?'

'Oh, certainly.'

'Well,' cried I, 'here we are at Chelsea Pier. Now, first of all we want thirty feet of rope stout enough to lower a man by. Do you know where it can be bought near at hand?'

'Yes, just down this way.'

'Very well, go and bring it as quickly as you can. Then come back here. I shall be waiting.'

Without a word Bracken set off at a run, and I turned into a public house close at hand, got a quartern of brandy, diluted it with a quartern of water, and carried away the grog in a flat, half-pint bottle. I then called a Hansom and awaited my companion.

In a few minutes he was with me carrying the rope tied up in a hank. 'Jump in,' I cried, and to the cabman, 'Chelsea Bridge, second pier.'

'Second what?' demanded the cabman.

'Half way over,' I shouted.

'By George,' exclaimed the detective, 'you're right again. We have him now.'

'All is well if he is not dead.'

'Dead!' cried he. 'Why do you think he's dead? How did you guess he was there?'

'We haven't much time, and I'll answer the two questions as shortly as I can, taking number two first:—All along as we came I kept looking out for a clue to any use for that lead and line. As we approached Chelsea Bridge I saw those massive iron trellis chambers which rest on the piers and support the bridge. I saw that one of them would suit all his requirements, and that his having sought sanctuary there would have been quite consistent with all the case as you had told it to me, and with the limitations you had put upon his whereabouts. Then I saw the way in which he could have used that line and that lead. He rolled the lead around one end of the rope, then threw the loaded end of the line into the interstices of the girders and bands, drew it home until it

became entangled and would stir no more ; then he could climb up by the rope into the ironwork. It was no easy task, but he was young and resolute. As we came quite close to the bridge I felt almost certain that he was there. As we came under the bridge my suspicions became certainties, with the new idea that it was likely he was dead.'

'What led you to think he was dead?'

'The same thing which convinced me finally that we had come upon his hiding place—the sparrows. I saw them fly out of the trellis work. I have often been up and down this river before, and never until to-day saw sparrows at either of those piers. What could bring the birds there at this time, but food? And what food could there be for them in such a place save the food he had bought? Since the pier was built we are safe to assume there never has been an ounce of food on either until he went there. Now do you not see why I fear that he is dead?'

'Yes, the sparrows would not make so bold if he were alive and able to stir.'

'Just so. Here we are! Jump out, Bracken, and Heaven grant we may be in time!'

'Amen!' responded the detective devoutly.

In a few minutes we had secured the rope to the parapet rail of the footway. I handed Bracken the brandy bottle, and five minutes had not elapsed before he began the descent to the projecting ledge of the bridge-pier. I leaned over and listened. In a few seconds I heard my companion cry out. 'All right. He's here, and alive, but insensible.'

A small crowd had gathered by this time. I sent one man off and told him to procure an arm-chair. As soon as young Jordan was somewhat revived by the brandy, Bracken, assisted by another man who had volunteered and gone down, passed him along the narrow stone ledge until they brought him under the parapet. Here he was secured in the arm-chair, which was then drawn to the top.

In the same cab that brought us from Chelsea he went back to his father and mother. It was long before he fully recovered from the effect of his long confinement in cramped attitudes, his long want of any exercise, and his half starvation; but he came round at length, and is now as hearty as any young man in London.

He has since told me that on the night of the seventeenth he drifted about below London Bridge until the end of the ebb, about a quarter to eight, then he drifted up on the flood. At forty minutes after one in the morning it was high water. He was then, as he had determined, at Chelsea Bridge. The night, or rather

morning, chanced to be foggy and dull, with enough rain to keep idlers under shelter. He tried and failed several times to throw the lead through the bars; and twice, when he had succeeded in getting it through, it drew out and almost killed him, and made him half swamp the boat by throwing him on his side. When he got the line securely fixed at last, he drew the other end taut through the painter ring-bolt. Then he went up the line, but fearing lest some one should have observed him he kept the boat thus moored as a means of escape, and lay down, worn out by fatigue. He fell asleep, and when he awoke was horrified to find that it was striking six. 'If I put my watch in the bilge, now,' he thought, 'they'll be sure I went overboard below London Bridge on last ebb, and they'll never dream of looking for me here.' He slid down the rope, threw the watch aft, cast off the line forehead, and scrambled up again to his hiding place, drawing the line up afterwards. It had often occurred to him, in going up and down the river, that this cage would afford a capital hiding-place. When he first resolved to take sanctuary there, he had determined to use it only for a short time, until the earlier activity of the search for him had considerably declined. The food he had obtained would, he calculated, keep him well supplied for a week or ten days. Then he would lower himself down into the water by night, and, having swum ashore, obtain more. At the end of a month, he had thought, he might safely venture once more into the city, make his way to the docks, and get over to France. But, having once let himself down by the rope and submerged himself in the river, the cold was so intense, that he feared lest, upon his return from the shore, he should be so exhausted and numbed that to reascend would be simply impossible. So he had scrambled back, and never again sought to budge. 'I think I must have been insensible when Bracken came. I had been starving and sleeping off and on for a few days. I saw the sparrows flying about, but don't recollect any coming in. Towards the end of the time I would have given myself up, but was too weak to move hand or foot. Water was my greatest difficulty. I had no vessel. I had to lie still all day and get a little water at night, by fraying the ends of the rope, dropping the frayed end into the water, then drawing it up and squeezing it down my throat. Let us change the subject.'

He does not care to dwell upon his 'Elba days,' as he calls the time of his sojourn in that iron summer house, upon that smallest island ever for so long a time inhabited by man.

RICHARD DOWLING.

On the Possible Revival of Conversation.

DULL people, who are unhappily the majority of mankind, not content with that advantage, would fain persuade us that we are all dull; to this end they have set it about that the Augustan age of conversation has long ceased, and that nobody now says anything worth hearing. By constant repetition, and having at their disposal a great number of voices to disseminate this theory, they have got it to be generally accepted; without, as it seems to me, very sound grounds for it. For when pressed as to their Augustan age, they fall back, like the admirers of the 'good old times,' upon vague generalities; or, at the best, affirm, 'Well, there was Macaulay, you know,' or, 'Where is there a man now like Dr. Johnson?'

For Dr. Johnson I have, in common with the rest of my kind, a very hearty admiration and regard; but I should as soon think of numbering him among our gymnasts (because of his famous habit of stepping between the chinks of the pavement) as among our professors of the art of conversation. He was the champion-talker of the world; but he could not converse, and made conversation in others impossible. Nor was Macaulay himself, except in those 'brilliant flashes of silence,' in which he so rarely indulged, free from the same fault. His marvellous gift of memory has been described, indeed, as 'a tremendous engine of conversation,' but by one who really could converse, and who, perceiving its inappropriateness for such a purpose, 'spoke sarcastical.'

I have had the misfortune, on more than one occasion, to be asked to meet two great talking celebrities (both of them, I regret to say, still alive), who, though they did not take off their coats to it, reminded me of nothing so much as a couple of prize-fighters—gladiators of the tongue—who mauled one another for the amusement of the company: and a very melancholy exhibition it was. Sometimes they do not fight, but tell stories against each other. I don't mean that they rake up each other's private peccadilloes; *that* would be really interesting, while the materials on both sides would be practically unlimited; but each endeavours to outshine the other as a *raconteur*.

'When O'Toole is imitating Scotch,' says Macpherson, 'I always think he is talking Irish.' 'Macpherson is never so much upon his native heath, in respect to pronunciation,' says O'Toole, 'as when he tries to talk Scotch.'

‘My ear is not affected by these subtle distinctions ; if they don’t leave out their “h’s”—which one of them does—I have nothing to object to on the score of pronunciation, but I have a more serious complaint against them ; they are both authors, and have made use of every scrap of anecdote they ever picked up in their lives as ‘copy ;’ so their stories are not so new to me as they might be.

However, the point is, that so far from being conversationalists, they and their class are to be numbered among the foes of conversation. Just as the ‘star’ system prevents any play being put on the stage in a proper manner, so that each actor may be master of his part, and contribute to the general success of the piece, so to invite persons of this kind to ‘meet’ other persons, is to prevent that flow of genial talk which is the life-blood of a social entertainment.

I do not say that Macpherson and O’Toole had not their prototypes of old ; on the contrary, I believe there were more of them, but we are still much more tolerant of such people than we should be. They have overridden us so long, that Society scarcely recognises her own servile and degraded condition ; and as the philanthropist appealed to the needy knife-grinder, I would fain arouse in her a spirit of independence. ‘Dear friends,’ as I heard a preacher in the Park remark on Sunday last, ‘you have every one of you a personal and individual responsibility in this tremendous matter, and you’re a-shirkin’ on it.’ Day by day politicians complain we are growing more and more under the influence of personal government ; but whether that be so or not, it is a very small affair compared with the fact that we are giving up our common rights as men and women—the only distinctly speaking creatures, remember, with the trifling exceptions of the parrot and the starling—and falling into the hands of bores. ‘Uprouse ye, then,’—I do not say ‘my merry, merry men,’ for merriment is dead, and we are getting as dull as ditch-water—and make an effort for your own emancipation. ‘Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow.’ You have feelings—express them ; you have opinions—interchange them ; and—above all things—don’t be long about it.

That would be to imitate the foe. It is the length at which the people talk who do talk that overwhelms us. They give no opportunity save to the most practised whip (who very properly does so and upsets them) of ‘cutting in ;’ there is no chance of getting in a word edgeways. Suppose a man begins to descant (I take an extreme instance) upon blue china ; you feel of course that it is an outrage upon your intelligence ; you grow more and more irritated with him, and would give all you have in the world to be

locked up for five minutes with a big stick and all the blue china in his possession. But if you don't stop him at once, you find, as the wretch goes on, your indignation give way to despair; the ear grows jaded, the brain seems to fall in from premature decay, and for a time you become as great a fool as the Chinamaniac. From that moment he has you in his power; he holds you like the Ancient Mariner, wherever you meet him, with his fishy eye, and you cannot choose but listen. 'One more unfortunate' is added to his list of victims; one more scalp hangs in his china closet.

That bores are on the increase is certain; and they are of a worse class than the bores who oppressed our youth. Then you had what at the University are called 'Dons,' pompous personages who treated you at great length to quotations in Latin, and even Greek; a comparatively harmless form of torture, for it generally happened that you did not understand a word of them, and had only to affect a listening air, while engaged in reality on your own reflections; a relief that is denied you when you know what a man is talking about.

I remember a young friend of mine (who died early, and certainly went to Heaven) who dreadfully discomfited this class of bores by capping their classical quotations with equally long extracts from the English poets, which he had at his fingers' ends. The bore would mouth out something from Virgil's 'Georgics,' which would instantly remind my dear young friend of a passage in Thomson's 'Seasons,' a book the other scarcely knew by name. 'If you *must* quote,' he used to say, 'why should not English poems be quoted as much as Latin and Greek?' He was an *enfant terrible* of quite a novel class to those old gentlemen, and did good work in the world in the short space that fate allotted him.

There is a great deal of fuss made about public benefactors—after death; yet he sleeps in Kensal Green without a record. I once wrote in pencil on his tomb, 'He killed a bore;' but the authorities I suppose objected to it, for it was rubbed out the next morning.

Another class of ancient bores were the old Indians with their tiger stories, and slightly draped anecdotes of native ladies. But they had not the inexhaustible assortment of narratives which is possessed by the tale-teller of to-day; and when you said 'Excuse me, that's a capital story you are about to relate, but you have told it me before,' it generally (though not always) stopped them.

The political bore—with his 'thin end of the wedge, sir,'—also flourished in those times; but though an attempt has been made quite recently to revive him upon the Eastern question, the

race may be said to have died out of London, though it is still extant—and very fierce—in desert parts of the country. Indeed, it is curious to one who is not young, and who takes pleasure in noting the ways of his fellow-creatures, to observe how long the country wears the cast-off clothes of the town in this respect. The classical bore (though rare) is still to be picked up by the social antiquary in the provinces—never in the towns, but quite in the heart of Arcadia; the old Indian is, I am told, to be still met with at Bath, though I have not seen a specimen myself for these twenty years; and the political bore—just now with his ‘British interests, sir,’ and ‘the Suez Canal’—is rampant in all country districts.

Now, in these days, and in London, our bores are of quite another stamp; they do not oppress you, and, as it were, stamp you out, like the elephant, who mercifully causes you to lose consciousness, but they play with you like the tiger with his prey before devouring it. They titillate, ever so slightly, your unwilling interest, and having thus caused you to be alive and sensitive to their every word, they proceed to the torture. The most common direction for the modern bore to take is the art channel. He has ‘views’ upon certain modern painters, which he does not himself understand, but wishes to ventilate; or which, on the other hand, he not only does understand (or flatters himself so) but has taken up instead of a religious faith, and is prepared to go to the stake for them. I can remember the same epidemic in the pre-Raphaelite days, but it attacked us in a much more mitigated form. There was not the same eternal flow of verbiage, nor was it lit up with so fine a supply of moonshine.

The disciples of the latest school of poets are of the same class, but their talk has occasionally some shred of meaning in it, some pin’s-head of solidity, while that of the art critics proper eludes the grasp of the intelligence altogether. If my dear young friend already referred to were alive, I know what he would do to these people. He would give them a dose of metaphysics, of which he knew nothing, and was therefore eminently qualified to speak. He would put them out as the patent *extincteur* puts out the reek of flame and smoke by a still more fuliginous and offensive vapour.

So limp and depressed has Society become under this Art-inflation, which she is much too cowardly to resent, that she has begun to shirk all entertainments of a would-be social character, and ‘goes in’ (as the poor thing calls it) for scientific lectures and the improvement of her mind. Conversation is denied to her, so she pays 7s. 6d. for a *fauteuil*, and listens to disquisitions in the Royal Institution upon the ‘Production of Fleas from Fleabites,’

and the like amazing topics; whereof to hear her babble her own views, at second hand, in dining-rooms and drawing-rooms is, I must say, a great treat.

We are continually called upon to congratulate ourselves upon the wane of priestcraft, but no Clergyman that ever I listened to approaches—within a good slice of eternity—our present Professors, in the way of boredom. We have delivered ourselves over unto them, bound hand and foot; but not, surely, for ever. A little courage, dear friends, and we may once more enjoy a genial evening with one another, as in the old times. The sword of sharpness may be necessary; I am afraid, indeed, just at first, you must even be a little rude; but with one good stroke or two you may cut your bonds, and be free men and women.

First catch—no, there is no difficulty, alas! in catching them—first kill your bores. It is of no use ignoring them; cotton wool in the ears I have tried without success; it must be gun cotton; abolish them with an explosion of your pent-up indignation, and then fit yourselves for freedom.

For at present, believe me, you are not fit for it. The art of conversation has so long been lost among you, that your attempts in that way must needs at first be contemptible.

I do not go to balls myself, but I was told by one who does that the following interchange of ideas took place of late in a certain ball-room; he overheard it with his own ears, and it seems to me a charming example of what people say to one another, nowadays, under the impression that they are conversing. The *dramatis personæ* are a young gentleman and a young lady of fashion. The latter having little or nothing to speak of on her shoulders, and naturally standing in a draught, after dancing, begins therefore to shiver. ‘Dear me,’ says she, smiling sweetly, ‘a goose must be walking over my grave.’

The young gentleman looks at her fondly, thinks a moment, and then observes, ‘Happy goose!’

I am aware that a ball-room is not the place for intellectual converse, but did you ever hear such an epigram or repartee (for my informant feels certain both speakers thought it to be something of that kind) as this? The young man, I am assured, was not an exceptionally stupid young man, which is of importance to the topic in hand. Of course there are very dull young men to whom conversation of any sort is impossible. I remember one, whose adventure as an undergraduate with a learned professor at Cambridge was in everybody’s mouth when I was at college. There was some family connection between them, which was the fatal cause of their brief intercourse. The Professor, who was very

deaf, asked his young friend to dinner. After the usual greetings, the company being dull or oppressed with the great learning of their entertainer, conversation languished, and then ceased. The undergraduate, in a blue funk, but *thinking he ought to say something though he had nothing to say*—an evil that lies at the root of this matter, my friends—put the following inquiry, ‘Do you not think, Professor, that the Gogmagogs are very high hills?’

‘Sir, I do not catch your observation.’

‘Do you not think’ (much louder) ‘that the Gogmagogs¹ are very high hills?’

The Professor shook his head; not in dissent, alas!—*that* would have been an enormous relief to the young man—but to signify that he had still failed to understand what had been said.

‘John, fetch my ear-trumpet.’

Imagine the condition of the undergraduate while that scientific instrument was being fetched from the top of the house! If there was such a thing as a black funk, his blue one had turned to it by that time, and he had not a dry thread on him. It is sad enough to have only a copper to drop into a silver collecting plate in the presence of a congregation; but to have to drop such an observation as ‘Do you not think, &c.’ into an ear-trumpet with a Professor of Divinity at the other end of it, transcends in the way of embarrassment all human experience.

It cannot be denied that this undergraduate was naturally dull. But he had been brought up (in a Philistine family) to believe that it is our duty to make conversation whether we have the materials or not, just as the Egyptians compelled the poor Jews to make bricks without straw.

This theory has been a most fruitful cause of the decay of social intercourse and geniality; it has begotten Chatterboxes, a pestilent race,² and encouraged colloquial inanity.

The error of the young gentleman in the ball-room arose from a totally different circumstance; he was not a fool, like the other, but he thought it necessary to say something striking and artificial. ‘Happy goose!’ had a sort of bastard sentiment underlying it, and he had an idea that he was paying a vague but high-flown, and therefore all the more acceptable, compliment. Yet, as there is nothing so pleasing in a fellow-creature as his obvious desire to please you, so there is nothing so easy—or that less requires the aid of artificiality—as to make that desire manifest. If, indeed, you have not got it, it is difficult to feign it; but no man is fit for conversation—in any genial sense—who is *not* willing to please

¹ The Gogmagogs are only hills because Cambridgeshire is flat: they are about 14 feet or so above the level of the sea.

his neighbour. If he only wants to show his own wit, or to ventilate his own ideas, he doesn't even understand what conversation means, and has certainly never experienced its charms. The best conversationalists I know are all kind-hearted; men of cheerful countenances and conciliatory manners; nor do I blame them if, when their advances are met with coldness or antagonism, they have, most of them, a rough side to their tongues. It is their misfortune that their sharp sayings under such circumstances are quoted, while their general agreeability is of course incapable of being represented. It is their habit, in the first place at all events, to endeavour to sympathise with their neighbour; and if he shows himself contemptuous or careless of such courtesy, it is only right that he should be taught better manners, in a way suitable to the thickness of his skin.

The present fondness for personalities is another obstacle to the interchange, I do not say of thoughts—for we are not all thoughtful—but of those tastes and opinions which are possessed more or less by every one, and which demand expression and encouragement as the flowers require air and sunshine. The malicious enjoyment of scandal is now preferred to all kindly converse; the result of which (among other evils) is, that scarcely a dinner party takes place without some one or other 'putting his foot in it,' by hurting the feelings of some fellow-guest who is connected by blood or marriage with the 'parties' implicated. Why should we not cultivate a little human sympathy with one another, instead of its opposite? Why not be natural instead of artificial? To show an interest in a fellow-creature's calling, prospects, family, pursuits—even if you must need feign it—wins him or her over to you far more, believe me, and renders mutual confidence far easier, than an affected enthusiasm for Japanese silks, or a pumped-up interest in the question as to whether the jar sold at Christie's yesterday for a thousand guineas had a crack in it or not. Talk on 'Shakespeare and the Musical Glasses' may have been open to objection, but what can be said of talk upon the musical glasses only, and between two persons who neither of them care for music! It is not too much to assert that one-half the time that might be otherwise passed in an agreeable manner with one's fair neighbour, for example, is devoted to asking her 'Whether she has heard Fiddle-de-dee at the Monday Popular?' 'Whether she knows that the Court is coming to London the week after next?' and 'Whether she is going to the French Exhibition?'—about none of which things you probably care one halfpenny; and though she may reply that Fiddle-de-dee is 'quite too awfully nice,' she cares as little as you do. It would not take much trouble, and would be

kinder as well as more sensible, to find out what she does care about; but as it is, your cut-and-dried questions get cut-and-dried answers, which, though by no means dividing your attention with the fish and entrées, interfere with your appreciation of them.

An amateur actress once complimented an amateur actor in my hearing upon his dramatic talents: 'You are never so natural, Mr. A.,' she said, 'as when you are on the stage.'

'And you, Lady B., are never so much an actress,' he rejoined, 'as when you are off it.' Which, though rude, was perfectly true.

Society is growing more and more stagey and artificial daily, but especially the female portion of it. Those who talk, talk for effect; and the rest attitudinise. It is quite marvellous how few women are left in the world—and not many men—who venture to be natural. Yet it is the most charming of all styles of talk, and certainly the easiest—since it has neither to be acquired nor assumed. It may, indeed, be urged, that when people are by nature disagreeable, it is to the public advantage that they should not be natural in their manners. Let us take it for granted, then, in future, that when folks are artificial, they have something to hide which would otherwise disgrace them. Naturalness will then be the touchstone of character, as it is the keystone of all human intercourse.

Believe me, my friends, this is the nearest road to social enjoyment; the best contribution towards the extinction of all kinds of boredom, from 'a few words on the topics of the day' down to 'a little music in the evening'; and the only chance that is left to us of the Revival of Conversation.

The Haunted Hotel :

A MYSTERY OF MODERN VENICE.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

(The right of translation is reserved.)

THE SECOND PART (*continued*).—CHAPTER VI.

THE next day, the friend and legal adviser of Agnes Lockwood, Mr. Troy, called on her by appointment in the evening.

Mrs. Ferrari—still persisting in the conviction of her husband's death—had sufficiently recovered to be present at the consultation. Assisted by Agnes, she told the lawyer the little that was known relating to Ferrari's disappearance, and then produced the correspondence connected with that event. Mr. Troy read (first) the three letters addressed by Ferrari to his wife; (secondly) the letter written by Ferrari's courier-friend, describing his visit to the palace and his interview with Lady Montbarry; and (thirdly) the one line of anonymous writing which had accompanied the extraordinary gift of a thousand pounds to Ferrari's wife.

Well known, at a later period, as the lawyer who acted for Lady Lydiard, in the case of theft, generally described as the case of 'My Lady's Money,' Mr. Troy was not only a man of learning and experience in his profession—he was also a man who had seen something of society at home and abroad. He possessed a keen eye for character, a quaint humour, and a kindly nature which had not been deteriorated even by a lawyer's professional experience of mankind. With all these personal advantages, it is a question, nevertheless, whether he was the fittest adviser whom Agnes could have chosen under the circumstances. Little Mrs. Ferrari, with many domestic merits, was an essentially commonplace woman. Mr. Troy was the last person living who was likely to attract her sympathies—he was the exact opposite of a commonplace man.

'She looks very ill, poor thing!' In these words the lawyer opened the business of the evening, referring to Mrs. Ferrari as unceremoniously as if she had been out of the room.

'She has suffered a terrible shock,' Agnes answered.

Mr. Troy turned to Mrs. Ferrari, and looked at her again, with the interest due to the victim of a shock. He drummed absently with his fingers on the table. At last he spoke to her.

‘My good lady, you don’t really believe that your husband is dead?’

Mrs. Ferrari put her handkerchief to her eyes. The word ‘dead’ was ineffectual to express her feelings. ‘Murdered!’ she said sternly, behind her handkerchief.

‘Why? And by whom?’ Mr. Troy asked.

Mrs. Ferrari seemed to find some difficulty in answering. ‘You have read my husband’s letters, sir,’ she began. ‘I believe he discovered——’ She got as far as that, and there she stopped.

‘What did he discover?’

There are limits to human patience—even the patience of a bereaved wife. This cool question irritated Mrs. Ferrari into expressing herself plainly at last.

‘He discovered Lady Montbarry and the Baron!’ she answered, with a burst of hysterical vehemence. ‘The Baron is no more that vile woman’s brother than I am. The wickedness of those two wretches came to my poor dear husband’s knowledge. The lady’s maid left her place on account of it. If Ferrari had gone away too, he would have been alive at this moment. They have killed him. I say they have killed him, to prevent it from getting to Lord Montbarry’s ears.’ So, in short sharp sentences, and in louder and louder accents, Mrs. Ferrari stated *her* opinion of the case.

Still keeping his own view in reserve, Mr. Troy listened with an expression of satirical approval.

‘Very strongly stated, Mrs. Ferrari,’ he said. ‘You build up your sentences well; you clench your conclusions in a workmanlike manner. If you had been a man, you would have made a good lawyer—you would have taken juries by the scruff of their necks. Complete the case, my good lady—complete the case. Tell us next who sent you this letter, enclosing the bank-note. The “two wretches” who murdered Mr. Ferrari would hardly put their hands in their pockets and send you a thousand pounds. Who is it—eh? I see the post-mark on the letter is “Venice.” Have you any friend in that interesting city, with a large heart, and a purse to correspond, who has been let into the secret and who wishes to console you anonymously?’

It was not easy to reply to this. Mrs. Ferrari began to feel the first inward approaches of something like hatred towards Mr. Troy. ‘I don’t understand you, sir,’ she answered. ‘I don’t think this is a joking matter.’

Agnes interfered, for the first time. She drew her chair a little nearer to her legal counsellor and friend.

‘What is the most probable explanation, in your opinion?’ she asked.

‘I shall offend Mrs. Ferrari if I tell you,’ Mr. Troy answered.

‘No, sir, you won’t!’ cried Mrs. Ferrari, hating Mr. Troy undisguisedly by this time.

The lawyer leaned back in his chair. ‘Very well,’ he said, in his most good-humoured manner. ‘Let’s have it out. Observe, madam, I don’t dispute your view of the position of affairs at the palace in Venice. You have your husband’s letters to justify you; and you have also the significant fact that Lady Montbarry’s maid did really leave the house. We will say, then, that Lord Montbarry has presumably been made the victim of a foul wrong—that Mr. Ferrari was the first to find it out—and that the guilty persons had reason to fear, not only that he would acquaint Lord Montbarry with his discovery, but that he would be a principal witness against them if the scandal was made public in a court of law. Now mark! Admitting all this, I draw a totally different conclusion from the conclusion at which you have arrived. Here is your husband left in this miserable household of three, under very awkward circumstances for *him*. What does he do? But for the bank-note and the written message sent to you with it, I should say that he had wisely withdrawn himself from association with a disgraceful discovery and exposure, by taking secretly to flight. The money modifies this view—unfavourably so far as Mr. Ferrari is concerned. I still believe he is keeping out of the way. But I now say he is paid for keeping out of the way—and that bank-note there on the table is the price of his absence, paid by the guilty persons to his wife.’

Mrs. Ferrari’s watery grey eyes brightened suddenly; Mrs. Ferrari’s dull drab-coloured complexion became enlivened by a glow of brilliant red.

‘It’s false!’ she cried. ‘It’s a burning shame to speak of my husband in that way!’

‘I told you I should offend you!’ said Mr. Troy.

Agnes interposed once more—in the interests of peace. She took the offended wife’s hand; she appealed to the lawyer to reconsider that side of his theory which reflected harshly on Ferrari. While she was still speaking, the servant interrupted her by entering the room with a visiting-card. It was the card of Henry Westwick; and there was an ominous request written on it in pencil. ‘I bring bad news. Let me see you for a minute downstairs.’ Agnes immediately left the room.

Alone with Mrs. Ferrari, Mr. Troy permitted his natural kind-

ness of heart to show itself on the surface at last. He tried to make his peace with the courier's wife.

'You have every claim, my good soul, to resent a reflection cast upon your husband,' he began. 'I may even say that I respect you for speaking so warmly in his defence. At the same time, remember that I am bound, in such a serious matter as this, to tell you what is really in my mind. I can have no intention of offending you, seeing that I am a total stranger to you and to Mr. Ferrari. A thousand pounds is a large sum of money; and a poor man may excusably be tempted by it to do nothing worse than to keep out of the way for a while. My only interest, acting on your behalf, is to get at the truth. If you will give me time, I see no reason to despair of finding your husband yet.'

Ferrari's wife listened, without being convinced: her narrow little mind, filled to its extreme capacity by her unfavourable opinion of Mr. Troy, had no room left for the process of correcting its first impression. 'I am much obliged to you, sir,' was all she said. Her eyes were more communicative—her eyes added, in *their* language, 'You may say what you please; I will never forgive you to my dying day.'

Mr. Troy gave it up. He composedly wheeled his chair round, put his hands in his pockets, and looked out of window.

After an interval of silence, the drawing-room door was opened.

Mr. Troy wheeled round again briskly to the table, expecting to see Agnes. To his surprise, there appeared, in her place, a perfect stranger to him—a gentleman, in the prime of life, with a marked expression of pain and embarrassment on his handsome face. He looked at Mr. Troy, and bowed gravely.

'I am so unfortunate as to have brought news to Miss Agnes Lockwood which has greatly distressed her,' he said. 'She has retired to her room. I am requested to make her excuses, and to speak to you in her place.'

Having introduced himself in those terms, he noticed Mrs. Ferrari, and held out his hand to her kindly. 'It is some years since we last met, Emily,' he said. 'I am afraid you have almost forgotten the "Master Henry" of old times.' Emily, in some little confusion, made her acknowledgments, and begged to know if she could be of any use to Miss Lockwood. 'The old nurse is with her,' Henry answered; 'they will be better left together.' He turned once more to Mr. Troy. 'I ought to tell you,' he said, 'that my name is Henry Westwick. I am the younger brother of the late Lord Montbarry.'

'The *late* Lord Montbarry!' Mr. Troy exclaimed, Google

'My brother died at Venice, yesterday evening. There is the telegram.' With that startling answer, he handed the paper to Mr. Troy.

The message was in these words:

'Lady Montbarry, Venice. To Stephen Robert Westwick, Newbury's Hotel, London. It is useless to take the journey. Lord Montbarry died of bronchitis, at 8.40 this evening. All needful details by post.'

'Was this expected, sir?' the lawyer asked.

'I cannot say that it has taken us entirely by surprise,' Henry answered. 'My brother Stephen (who is now the head of the family) received a telegram three days since, informing him that alarming symptoms had declared themselves, and that a second physician had been called in. He telegraphed back to say that he had left Ireland for London, on his way to Venice, and to direct that any further message might be sent to his hotel. The reply came in a second telegram. It announced that Lord Montbarry was in a state of insensibility, and that, in his brief intervals of consciousness, he recognised nobody. My brother was advised to wait in London for later information. The third telegram is now in your hands. That is all I know, up to the present time.'

Happening to look at the courier's wife, Mr. Troy was struck by the expression of blank fear which showed itself in the woman's face.

'Mrs. Ferrari,' he said, 'have you heard what Mr. Westwick has just told me?'

'Every word of it, sir.'

'Have you any questions to ask?'

'No, sir.'

'You seem to be alarmed,' the lawyer persisted. 'Is it still about your husband?'

'I shall never see my husband again, sir. I have thought so all along, as you know. I feel sure of it now.'

'Sure of it, after what you have just heard?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Can you tell me why?'

'No, sir. It's a feeling I have. I can't tell why.'

'Oh, a feeling?' Mr. Troy repeated, in a tone of compassionate contempt. 'When it comes to feelings, my good soul——!' He left the sentence unfinished, and rose to take his leave of Mr. Westwick. The truth is, he began to feel puzzled himself, and he did not choose to let Mrs. Ferrari see it. 'Accept the expression of my sympathy, sir,' he said to Mr. Westwick politely. 'I wish you good evening.'

Henry turned to Mrs. Ferrari as the lawyer closed the door. 'I have heard of your trouble, Emily, from Miss Lockwood. Is there anything I can do to help you?'

'Nothing, sir, thank you. Perhaps, I had better go home after what has happened? I will call to-morrow, and see if I can be of any use to Miss Agnes. I am very sorry for her.' She stole away, with her formal curtsy, her noiseless step, and her obstinate resolution to take the gloomiest view of her husband's case.

Henry Westwick looked round him in the solitude of the little drawing-room. There was nothing to keep him in the house, and yet he lingered in it. It was something to be even near Agnes—to see the things belonging to her that were scattered about the room. There, in one corner, was her chair, with her embroidery on the work-table by its side. On the little easel near the window was her last drawing, not quite finished yet. The book she had been reading lay on the sofa, with her tiny pencil-case in it to mark the place at which she had left off. One after another, he looked at the objects that reminded him of the woman whom he loved—took them up tenderly—and laid them down again with a sigh. Ah, how far, how unattainably far from him, she was still! 'She will never forget Montbarry,' he thought to himself as he took up his hat to go. 'Not one of us feels his death as she feels it. Miserable, miserable wretch—how she loved him!'

In the street, as Henry closed the house-door, he was stopped by a passing acquaintance—a wearisome inquisitive man—doubly unwelcome to him, at that moment. 'Sad news, Westwick, this about your brother. Rather an unexpected death, wasn't it? We never heard at the club that Montbarry's lungs were weak. What will the insurance offices do?'

Henry started; he had never thought of his brother's life insurance. What could the offices do but pay? A death by bronchitis, certified by two physicians, was surely the least disputable of all deaths. 'I wish you hadn't put that question into my head!' he broke out irritably. 'Ah!' said his friend, 'you think the widow will get the money? So do I! so do I!'

CHAPTER VII.

SOME days later, the insurance offices (two in number) received the formal announcement of Lord Montbarry's death, from her ladyship's London solicitors. The sum insured in each office was five thousand pounds—on which one year's premium only had been paid. In the face of such a pecuniary emergency as this, the Directors thought it desirable to consider their position. The



Lady Montarry and Mrs. Ferrari.

medical advisers of the two offices, who had recommended the insurance of Lord Montbarry's life, were called into council over their own reports. The result excited some interest among persons connected with the business of life insurance. Without absolutely declining to pay the money, the two offices (acting in concert) decided on sending a commission of inquiry to Venice, 'for the purpose of obtaining further information.'

Mr. Troy received the earliest intelligence of what was going on. He wrote at once to communicate his news to Agnes; adding, what he considered to be a valuable hint, in these words:

'You are intimately acquainted, I know, with Lady Barville, the late Lord Montbarry's eldest sister. The solicitors employed by her husband, are also the solicitors to one of the two insurance offices. There may possibly be something in the Report of the commission of inquiry touching on Ferrari's disappearance. Ordinary persons would not be permitted, of course, to see such a document. But a sister of the late lord is so near a relative as to be an exception to general rules. If Sir Theodore Barville puts it on that footing, the lawyers, even if they do not allow his wife to look at the Report, will at least answer any discreet questions she may ask referring to it.'

The reply was received by return of post. Agnes declined to avail herself of Mr. Troy's proposal.

'My interference, innocent as it was,' she wrote, 'has already been productive of such deplorable results, that I cannot and dare not stir any further in the case of Ferrari. If I had not consented to let that unfortunate man refer to me by name, the late Lord Montbarry would never have engaged him, and his wife would have been spared the misery and suspense from which she is suffering now. I would not even look at the Report to which you allude if it was placed in my hands—I have heard more than enough already of that hideous life in the palace at Venice. If Mrs. Ferrari chooses to address herself to Lady Barville (with your assistance), that is of course quite another thing. But, even in this case, I must make it a positive condition that my name shall not be mentioned. Forgive me, dear Mr. Troy! I am very unhappy, and very unreasonable—but I am only a woman, and you must not expect too much from me.'

Foiled in this direction, the lawyer next advised making the attempt to discover the present address of Lady Montbarry's English maid. This excellent suggestion had one drawback: it could only be carried out by spending money—and there was no money to spend. Mrs. Ferrari shrank from the bare idea of making any use of the thousand-pound note. It had been deposited in the

safe keeping of a bank. If it was even mentioned in her hearing, she shuddered and referred to it, with melodramatic fervour, as 'my husband's blood-money!'

So, under stress of circumstances, the attempt to solve the mystery of Ferrari's disappearance was suspended for a while.

It was the last month of the year 1860. The commission of inquiry was already at work; having begun its investigations on December 6. On the 10th, the term for which the late Lord Montbarry had hired the Venetian palace, expired. News by telegram reached the insurance offices that Lady Montbarry had been advised by her lawyers to leave for London with as little delay as possible. Baron Rivar, it was believed, would accompany her to England, but would not remain in that country, unless his services were absolutely required by her ladyship. The Baron, 'well known as an enthusiastic student of chemistry,' had heard of certain recent discoveries in connection with that science, in the United States, and was anxious to investigate them personally.

These items of news, collected by Mr. Troy, were duly communicated to Mrs. Ferrari, whose anxiety about her husband made her a frequent, a too frequent, visitor at the lawyer's office. She attempted to relate what she had heard to her good friend and protectress. Agnes steadily refused to listen, and positively forbade any further conversation relating to Lord Montbarry's wife, now that Lord Montbarry was no more. 'You have Mr. Troy to advise you,' she said; 'and you are welcome to what little money I can spare, if money is wanted. All I ask in return is that you will not distress me. I am trying to separate myself from remembrances——' her voice faltered; she paused to control herself—'from remembrances,' she resumed, 'which are sadder than ever since I have heard of Lord Montbarry's death. Help me by your silence to recover my spirits, if I can. Let me hear nothing more, until I can rejoice with you that your husband is found.'

Time advanced to the 13th of the month; and more information of the interesting sort reached Mr. Troy. The labours of the insurance commission had come to an end—the Report had been received from Venice on that day.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON the 14th the Directors and their legal advisers met for the reading of the Report, with closed doors. These were the terms in which the Commissioners related the results of their inquiry:

‘Private and confidential.

‘We have the honour to inform our Directors that we arrived in Venice on December 6, 1860. On the same day we proceeded to the palace inhabited by Lord Montbarry at the time of his last illness and death.

‘We were received with all possible courtesy by Lady Montbarry’s brother, Baron Rivar. “My sister was her husband’s only attendant throughout his illness,” the Baron informed us. “She is overwhelmed by grief and fatigue—or she would have been here to receive you personally. What are your wishes, gentlemen? and what can I do for you, in her ladyship’s place?”

‘In accordance with our instructions, we answered that the death and burial of Lord Montbarry abroad made it desirable to obtain more complete information relating to his illness, and to the circumstances which had attended it, than could be conveyed in writing. We explained that the law provided for the lapse of a certain interval of time before the payment of the sum assured, and we expressed our wish to conduct the inquiry with the most respectful consideration for her ladyship’s feelings, and for the convenience of any other members of the family inhabiting the house.

‘To this the Baron replied, “I am the only member of the family living here, and I and the palace are entirely at your disposal.” From first to last we found this gentleman perfectly straightforward, and most amiably willing to assist us.

‘With the one exception of her ladyship’s room, we went over the whole of the palace the same day. It is an immense place, only partially furnished. The first floor and part of the second floor were the portions of it that had been inhabited by Lord Montbarry and the members of the household. We saw the bedchamber, at one extremity of the palace, in which his lordship died, and the small room communicating with it, which he used as a study. Next to this was a large apartment or hall, the doors of which he habitually kept locked, his object being (as we were informed) to pursue his studies uninterruptedly in perfect solitude. On the other side of the large hall were the bedchamber occupied by her ladyship, and the dressing-room in which the maid slept previous to her departure for England. Beyond these were the dining and reception rooms, opening into an antechamber, which gave access to the grand staircase of the palace.

‘The only inhabited rooms on the second floor were the sitting-room and bed-room occupied by Baron Rivar, and another room at some distance from it, which had been the bed-room of the courier Ferrari.

‘The rooms on the third floor and on the basement were completely unfurnished, and in a condition of great neglect. We inquired if there was anything to be seen below the basement—and we were at once informed that there were vaults beneath, which we were at perfect liberty to visit.

‘We went down, so as to leave no part of the palace unexplored. The vaults were, it was believed, used as dungeons in the old times—say, some centuries since. Air and light were only partially admitted to these dismal places by two long shafts of winding construction, which communicated with the back yard of the palace, and the openings of which, high above the ground, were protected by iron gratings. The stone stairs leading down into the vaults could be closed at will by a heavy trap-door in the back hall, which we found open. The Baron himself led the way down the stairs. We remarked that it might be awkward if that trap-door fell down and closed the opening behind us. The Baron smiled at the idea. “Don’t be alarmed, gentlemen,” he said; “the door is safe. I had an interest in seeing to it myself, when we first inhabited the palace. My favourite study is the study of experimental chemistry—and my workshop, since we have been in Venice, is down here.”

‘These last words explained a curious smell in the vaults, which we noticed the moment we entered them. We can only describe the smell by saying that it was of a two-fold sort—faintly aromatic, as it were, in its first effect, but with some after-odour very sickening in our nostrils. The Baron’s furnaces and retorts, and other things, were all there to speak for themselves, together with some packages of chemicals, having the name and address of the person who had supplied them plainly visible on their labels. “Not a pleasant place for study,” Baron Rivar observed, “but my sister is timid. She has a horror of chemical smells and explosions—and she has banished me to these lower regions, so that my experiments may neither be smelt nor heard.” He held out his hands, on which we had noticed that he wore gloves in the house. “Accidents will happen sometimes,” he said, “no matter how careful a man may be. I burnt my hands severely in trying a new combination the other day, and they are only recovering now.”

‘We mention these otherwise unimportant incidents, in order to show that our exploration of the palace was not impeded by any attempt at concealment. We were even admitted to her ladyship’s own room—on a subsequent occasion, when she went out to take the air. Our instructions recommended us to examine his lordship’s residence, because the extreme privacy of his life at Venice, and the remarkable departure of the only two servants in the

house, might have some suspicious connection with the nature of his death. We found nothing to justify suspicion.

‘As to his lordship’s retired way of life, we have conversed on the subject with the consul and the banker—the only two strangers who held any communication with him. He called once at the bank to obtain money on his letter of credit, and excused himself from accepting an invitation to visit the banker at his private residence, on the ground of delicate health. His lordship wrote to the same effect on sending his card to the consul, to excuse himself from personally returning that gentleman’s visit to the palace. We have seen the letter, and we beg to offer the following copy of it. “Many years passed in India have injured my constitution. I have ceased to go into society; the one occupation of my life now is the study of Oriental literature. The air of Italy is better for me than the air of England, or I should never have left home. Pray accept the apologies of a student and an invalid. The active part of my life is at an end.” The self-seclusion of his lordship seems to us to be explained in these brief lines. We have not, however, on that account spared our inquiries in other directions. Nothing to excite a suspicion of anything wrong has come to our knowledge.

‘As to the departure of the lady’s maid, we have seen the woman’s receipt for her wages, in which it is expressly stated that she left Lady Montbarry’s service because she disliked the Continent, and wished to get back to her own country. This is not an uncommon result of taking English servants to foreign parts. Lady Montbarry has informed us that she abstained from engaging another maid, in consequence of the extreme dislike which his lordship expressed to having strangers in the house, in the state of his health at that time.

‘The disappearance of the courier Ferrari is, in itself, unquestionably a suspicious circumstance. Neither her ladyship nor the Baron can explain it; and no investigation that we could make has thrown the smallest light on this event, or has justified us in associating it, directly or indirectly, with the object of our inquiry. We have even gone the length of examining the portmanteau which Ferrari left behind him. It contains nothing but clothes and linen—no money, and not even a scrap of paper in the pockets of the clothes. The portmanteau remains in charge of the police.

‘We have also found opportunities of speaking privately to the old woman who attends to the rooms occupied by her ladyship and the Baron. She was recommended to fill this situation by the keeper of the restaurant who has supplied the meals to the family

throughout the period of their residence at the palace. Her character is most favourably spoken of. Unfortunately, her limited intelligence makes her of no value as a witness. We were patient and careful in questioning her, and we found her perfectly willing to answer us; but we could elicit nothing which is worth including in the present Report.

‘On the second day of our inquiries, we had the honour of an interview with Lady Montbarry. Her ladyship looked miserably worn and ill, and seemed to be quite at a loss to understand what we wanted with her. Baron Rivar, who introduced us, explained the nature of our errand in Venice, and took pains to assure her that it was a purely formal duty on which we were engaged. Having satisfied her ladyship on this point, he discreetly left the room.

‘The questions which we addressed to Lady Montbarry related mainly, of course, to his lordship’s illness. The answers, given with great nervousness of manner, but without the slightest appearance of reserve, informed us of the facts that follow:

‘Lord Montbarry had been out of order for some time past—nervous and irritable. He first complained of having taken cold on November, 13 last; he passed a wakeful and feverish night, and remained in bed the next day. Her ladyship proposed sending for medical advice. He refused to allow her to do this, saying that he could quite easily be his own doctor in such a trifling matter as a cold. Some hot lemonade was made at his request, with a view to producing perspiration. Lady Montbarry’s maid having left her at that time, the courier Ferrari (then the only servant in the house) went out to buy the lemons. Her ladyship made the drink with her own hands. It was successful in producing perspiration—and Lord Montbarry had some hours of sleep afterwards. Later in the day, having need of Ferrari’s services, Lady Montbarry rang for him. The bell was not answered. Baron Rivar searched for the man, in the palace and out of it, in vain. From that time forth, not a trace of Ferrari could be discovered. This happened on November 14.

‘On the night of the 14th, the feverish symptoms accompanying his lordship’s cold returned. They were in part perhaps attributable to the annoyance and alarm caused by Ferrari’s mysterious disappearance. It had been impossible to conceal the circumstance, as his lordship rang repeatedly for the courier; insisting that the man should relieve Lady Montbarry and the Baron by taking their places during the night at his bedside.

‘On the 15th (the day on which the old woman first came to do the house-work), his lordship complained of sore throat, and of a

feeling of oppression on the chest. On this day, and again on the 16th, her ladyship and the Baron entreated him to see a doctor. He still refused. "I don't want strange faces about me; my cold will run its course, in spite of the doctor,"—that was his answer. On the 17th he was so much worse, that it was decided to send for medical help whether he liked it or not. Baron Rivar, after inquiry at the consul's, secured the services of Doctor Bruno, well known as an eminent physician in Venice; with the additional recommendation of having resided in England, and having made himself acquainted with English forms of medical practice.

'Thus far, our account of his lordship's illness has been derived from statements made by Lady Montbarry. The narrative will now be most fitly continued in the language of the doctor's own report, herewith subjoined.

"My medical diary informs me that I first saw the English Lord Montbarry, on November 17. He was suffering from a sharp attack of bronchitis. Some precious time had been lost, through his obstinate objection to the presence of a medical man at his bedside. Generally speaking, he appeared to be in a delicate state of health. His nervous system was out of order—he was at once timid and contradictory. When I spoke to him in English, he answered in Italian; and when I tried him in Italian, he went back to English. It mattered little—the malady had already made such progress that he could only speak a few words at a time, and those in a whisper.

"I at once applied the necessary remedies. Copies of my prescriptions (with translation into English) accompany the present statements, and are left to speak for themselves.

"For the next three days I was in constant attendance on my patient. He answered to the remedies employed—improving slowly, but decidedly. I could conscientiously assure Lady Montbarry that no danger was to be apprehended thus far. She was indeed a most devoted wife. I vainly endeavoured to induce her to accept the services of a competent nurse: she would allow nobody to attend on her husband but herself. Night and day this estimable woman was at his bedside. In her brief intervals of repose, her brother watched the sick man in her place. This brother was, I must say, very good company, in the intervals when we had time for a little talk. He dabbled in chemistry, down in the horrid under-water vaults of the palace; and he wanted to show me some of his experiments. I have enough of chemistry in writing prescriptions—and I declined. He took it quite good-humouredly.

“I am straying away from my subject. Let me return to the sick lord.

“Up to the 20th, then, things went well enough. I was quite unprepared for the disastrous change that showed itself, when I paid Lord Montbarry my morning visit on the 21st. He had relapsed, and seriously relapsed. Examining him to discover the cause, I found symptoms of pneumonia—that is to say, in unmedical language, inflammation of the substance of the lungs. He breathed with difficulty, and was only partially able to relieve himself by coughing. I made the strictest inquiries, and was assured that his medicine had been administered as carefully as usual, and that he had not been exposed to any changes of temperature. It was with great reluctance that I added to Lady Montbarry’s distress; but I felt bound, when she suggested a consultation with another physician, to own that I too thought there was really need for it.

“Her ladyship instructed me to spare no expense, and to get the best medical opinion in Italy. The best opinion was happily within our reach. The first and foremost of Italian physicians, is Torello of Padua. I sent a special messenger for the great man. He arrived on the evening of the 21st, and confirmed my opinion that pneumonia had set in, and that our patient’s life was in danger. I told him what my treatment of the case had been, and he approved of it in every particular. He made some valuable suggestions, and (at Lady Montbarry’s express request) he consented to defer his return to Padua until the following morning.

“We both saw the patient at intervals in the course of the night. The disease, steadily advancing, set our utmost resistance at defiance. In the morning Doctor Torello took his leave. ‘I can be of no further use,’ he said to me. ‘The man is past all help—and he ought to know it.’

“Later in the day I warned my lord, as gently as I could, that his time had come. I am informed that there are serious reasons for my stating what passed between us on this occasion, in detail, and without any reserve. I comply with the request.

“Lord Montbarry received the intelligence of his approaching death with becoming composure, but with a certain doubt. He signed to me to put my ear to his mouth. He whispered faintly, ‘Are you sure?’ It was no time to deceive him; I said, ‘Positively sure.’ He waited a little, gasping for breath, and then he whispered again, ‘Feel under my pillow.’ I found under his pillow a letter, sealed and stamped, ready for the post. His next words were just audible and no more—‘Post it yourself.’ I

answered, of course, that I would do so—and I did post the letter with my own hand. I looked at the address. It was directed to a lady in London. The street I cannot remember. The name I can perfectly recall: it was an Italian name—‘Mrs. Ferrari.’

“That night my lord nearly died of asphyxia. I got him through it for the time; and his eyes showed that he understood me when I told him, the next morning, that I had posted the letter. This was his last effort of consciousness. When I saw him again he was sunk in apathy. He lingered in a state of insensibility, supported by stimulants, until the 25th, and died (unconscious to the last) on the evening of that day.

“As to the cause of his death, it seems (if I may be excused for saying so) simply absurd to ask the question. Bronchitis, terminating in pneumonia—there is no more doubt that this, and this only, was the malady of which he expired, than that two and two make four. Doctor Torello’s own note of the case is added here to a duplicate of my certificate, in order (as I am informed) to satisfy some English offices in which his lordship’s life was insured. The English offices must have been founded by that celebrated saint and doubter, mentioned in the New Testament, whose name was Thomas!”

‘Doctor Bruno’s narrative ends here.

‘Reverting for a moment to our inquiries addressed to Lady Montbarry, we have to report that she can give us no information on the subject of the letter which the doctor posted at Lord Montbarry’s request. When his lordship wrote it? what it contained? why he kept it a secret from Lady Montbarry (and from the Baron also)? and why he should write at all to the wife of his courier? these are questions to which we find it simply impossible to obtain any replies. It seems even useless to say that the matter is open to suspicion. Suspicion implies conjecture of some kind—and the letter under my lord’s pillow baffles all conjecture. Application to Mrs. Ferrari may perhaps clear up the mystery. Her residence in London will be easily discovered at the Italian Couriers’ Office, Golden Square.

‘Having arrived at the close of the present Report, we have now to draw your attention to the conclusion which is justified by the results of our investigation.

‘The plain question before our Directors and ourselves appears to be this: Has the inquiry revealed any extraordinary circumstances which render the death of Lord Montbarry open to suspicion? The inquiry has revealed extraordinary circumstances beyond all doubt—such as the disappearance of Ferrari, the re-

markable absence of the customary establishment of servants in the house, and the mysterious letter which his lordship asked the doctor to post. But where is the proof that any one of these circumstances is associated—suspiciously and directly associated—with the only event which concerns us, the event of Lord Montbarry's death? In the absence of any such proof, and in the face of the evidence of two eminent physicians, it is impossible to dispute the statement on the certificate that his lordship died a natural death. We are bound, therefore, to report, that there are no valid grounds for refusing the payment of the sum for which the late Lord Montbarry's life was assured.

'We shall send these lines to you by the post of to-morrow, December 10; leaving time to receive your further instructions (if any), in reply to our telegram of this evening announcing the conclusion of the inquiry.'

CHAPTER IX.

'Now, my good creature, whatever you have to say to me, out with it at once! I don't want to hurry you needlessly; but these are business hours, and I have other people's affairs to attend to besides yours.'

Addressing Ferrari's wife, with his usual blunt good-humour, in these terms, Mr. Troy registered the lapse of time by a glance at the watch on his desk, and then waited to hear what his client had to say to him.

'It's something more, sir, about the letter with the thousand-pound note,' Mrs. Ferrari began. 'I have found out who sent it to me.'

Mr. Troy started. 'This is news indeed!' he said. 'Who sent you the letter?'

'Lord Montbarry sent it, sir.'

It was not easy to take Mr. Troy by surprise. But Mrs. Ferrari threw him completely off his balance. For a while he could only look at her in silent surprise. 'Nonsense!' he said, as soon as he had recovered himself. 'There is some mistake—it can't be!'

'There is no mistake,' Mrs. Ferrari rejoined, in her most positive manner. 'Two gentlemen from the insurance offices called on me this morning, to see the letter. They were completely puzzled—especially when they heard of the bank-note inside. But they know who sent the letter. His lordship's doctor in Venice posted it at his lordship's request. Go to the gentlemen yourself, sir, if you don't believe me. They were polite enough to

ask if I could account for Lord Montbarry writing to me and sending me the money. I gave them my opinion directly—I said it was like his lordship's kindness.'

'Like his lordship's kindness?' Mr. Troy repeated, in blank amazement.

'Yes, sir! Lord Montbarry knew me, like all the other members of the family, when I was at school on the estate in Ireland. If he could have done it, he would have protected my poor dear husband. But he was helpless himself in the hands of my lady and the Baron—and the only kind thing he could do was to provide for me in my widowhood, like the true nobleman he was!'

'A very pretty explanation!' said Mr. Troy. 'What did your visitors from the insurance offices think of it?'

'They asked if I had any proof of my husband's death.'

'And what did you say?'

'I said, "I give you better than proof, gentlemen; I give you my positive opinion."'

'That satisfied them, of course?'

'They didn't say so in words, sir. They looked at each other—and wished me good-morning.'

'Well, Mrs. Ferrari, unless you have some more extraordinary news for me, I think I shall wish you good-morning too. I can take a note of your information (very startling information, I own); and, in the absence of proof, I can do no more.'

'I can provide you with proof, sir—if that is all you want,' said Mrs. Ferrari, with great dignity. 'I only wish to know, first, whether the law justifies me in doing it. You may have seen in the fashionable intelligence of the newspapers, that Lady Montbarry has arrived in London, at Newbury's Hotel. I propose to go and see her.'

'The deuce you do! May I ask for what purpose?'

Mrs. Ferrari answered in a mysterious whisper. 'For the purpose of catching her in a trap! I shan't send in my name—I shall announce myself as a person on business, and the first words I say to her will be these: "I come, my lady, to acknowledge the receipt of the money sent to Ferrari's widow." Ah! you may well start, Mr. Troy! It almost takes *you* off your guard, doesn't it? Make your mind easy, sir; I shall find the proof that everybody asks me for in her guilty face. Let her only change colour by the shadow of a shade—let her eyes only drop for half an instant—I shall discover her! The one thing I want to know is, does the law permit it?'

'The law permits it,' Mr. Troy answered gravely; 'but

whether her ladyship will permit it, is quite another question. Have you really courage enough, Mrs. Ferrari, to carry out this notable scheme of yours? You have been described to me, by Miss Lockwood, as rather a nervous, timid sort of person—and, if I may trust my own observation, I should say you justify the description.'

'If you had lived in the country, sir, instead of living in London,' Mrs. Ferrari replied, 'you would sometimes have seen even a sheep turn on a dog. I am far from saying that I am a bold woman—quite the reverse. But when I stand in that wretch's presence, and think of my murdered husband, the one of us two who is likely to be frightened is not *me*. I am going there now, sir. You shall hear how it ends. I wish you good-morning.'

With those brave words the courier's wife gathered her mantle about her, and walked out of the room.

Mr. Troy smiled—not satirically, but compassionately. 'The little simpleton!' he thought to himself. 'If half of what they say of Lady Montbarry is true, Mrs. Ferrari and her trap have but a poor prospect before them. I wonder how it will end?'

All Mr. Troy's experience failed to forewarn him of how it *did* end.

CHAPTER X.

IN the mean time, Mrs. Ferrari held to her resolution. She went straight from Mr. Troy's office to Newbury's Hotel.

Lady Montbarry was at home, and alone. But the authorities of the hotel hesitated to disturb her when they found that the visitor declined to mention her name. Her ladyship's new maid happened to cross the hall while the matter was still in debate. She was a Frenchwoman, and, on being appealed to, she settled the question in the swift, easy, rational French way. 'Madame's appearance was perfectly respectable. Madame might have reasons for not mentioning her name which Miladi might approve. In any case, there being no orders forbidding the introduction of a strange lady, the matter clearly rested between Madame and Miladi. Would Madame, therefore, be good enough to follow Miladi's maid up the stairs?'

In spite of her resolution, Mrs. Ferrari's heart beat as if it would burst out of her bosom, when her conductress led her into an ante-room, and knocked at a door opening into a room beyond. But it is remarkable that persons of sensitively-nervous organisation are the very persons who are capable of forcing themselves (apparently by the exercise of a spasmodic effort of will) into the

performance of acts of the most audacious courage. A low, grave voice from the inner room said, 'Come in.' The maid, opening the door, announced, 'A person to see you, Miladi, on business,' and immediately retired. In the one instant while these events passed, timid little Mrs. Ferrari mastered her own throbbing heart; stepped over the threshold, conscious of her clammy hands, dry lips, and burning head; and stood in the presence of Lord Montbarry's widow, to all outward appearance as supremely self-possessed as her ladyship herself.

It was still early in the afternoon, but the light in the room was dim. The blinds were drawn down. Lady Montbarry sat with her back to the windows, as if even the subdued daylight were disagreeable to her. She had altered sadly for the worse in her personal appearance, since the memorable day when Doctor Wybrow had seen her in his consulting-room. Her beauty was gone—her face had fallen away to mere skin and bone; the contrast between her ghastly complexion and her steely glittering black eyes was more startling than ever. Robed in dismal black, relieved only by the brilliant whiteness of her widow's cap—reclining in a panther-like suppleness of attitude on a little green sofa—she looked at the stranger who had intruded on her, with a moment's languid curiosity, then dropped her eyes again to the hand-screen which she held between her face and the fire. 'I don't know you,' she said. 'What do you want with me?'

Mrs. Ferrari tried to answer. Her first burst of courage had already worn itself out. The bold words that she had determined to speak were living words still in her mind, but they died on her lips.

There was a moment of silence. Lady Montbarry looked round again at the speechless stranger. 'Are you deaf?' she asked. There was another pause. Lady Montbarry quietly looked back again at the screen, and put another question. 'Do you want money?'

'Money!' That one word roused the sinking spirit of the courier's wife. She recovered her courage; she found her voice. 'Look at me, my lady, if you please,' she said, with a sudden outbreak of audacity.

Lady Montbarry looked round for the third time. The fatal words passed Mrs. Ferrari's lips.

'I come, my lady, to acknowledge the receipt of the money sent to Ferrari's widow.'

Lady Montbarry's glittering black eyes rested with steady attention on the woman who had addressed her in those terms. Not the faintest expression of confusion or alarm, not even a mo-

mentary flutter of interest stirred the deadly stillness of her face. She reposed as quietly, she held the screen as composedly, as ever. The test had been tried, and had irretrievably, utterly failed.

There was another silence. Lady Montbarry considered with herself. The smile that came slowly and went away suddenly—the smile at once so sad and so cruel—showed itself on her thin lips. She lifted her screen, and pointed with it to a seat at the farther end of the room. ‘Be so good as to take that chair,’ she said.

Helpless under her first bewildering sense of failure—not knowing what to say or what to do next—Mrs. Ferrari mechanically obeyed. Lady Montbarry, rising on the sofa for the first time, watched her with undisguised scrutiny as she crossed the room—then sank back into a reclining position once more. ‘No,’ she said to herself quietly, ‘the woman walks steadily; she is not intoxicated—the only other possibility is that she may be mad.’

She had spoken loud enough to be heard. Stung by the insult, Mrs. Ferrari instantly answered her: ‘I am no more drunk or mad than you are!’

‘No?’ said Lady Montbarry. ‘Then you are only insolent? The ignorant English mind (I have observed) is apt to be insolent in the exercise of unrestrained English liberty. This is very noticeable to us foreigners among you people in the streets. Of course I can’t be insolent to you, in return. I hardly know what to say to you. My maid was imprudent in admitting you so easily to my room. I suppose your respectable appearance misled her. I wonder who you are? You mentioned the name of a courier who left us very strangely. Was he married by any chance? Are you his wife? And do you know where he is?’

Mrs. Ferrari’s indignation burst its way through all restraints. She advanced to the sofa; she feared nothing, in the fervour and rage of her reply.

‘I am his widow—and you know it, you wicked woman! Ah! it was an evil hour when Miss Lockwood recommended my husband to be his lordship’s courier——!’

Before she could add another word, Lady Montbarry sprang from the sofa with the stealthy suddenness of a cat—seized her by both shoulders—and shook her with the strength and frenzy of a madwoman. ‘You lie! you lie! you lie!’ She dropped her hold at the third repetition of the accusation, and threw up her hands wildly with a gesture of despair. ‘Oh, Jesus Maria! is it possible?’ she cried. ‘Can the courier have come to me through that woman?’ She turned like lightning on Mrs. Ferrari, and stopped her as she was escaping from the room. ‘Stay here, you fool—stay here, and answer me! If you cry out, as sure as the heavens

are above you, I'll strangle you with my own hands. Sit down again—and fear nothing. Wretch! It is I who am frightened—frightened out of my senses. Confess that you lied, when you used Miss Lockwood's name just now! No! I don't believe you on your oath; I will believe nobody but Miss Lockwood herself. Where does she live? Tell me that, you noxious stinging little insect—and you may go.' Terrified as she was, Mrs. Ferrari hesitated. Lady Montbarry lifted her hands threateningly, with the long, lean, yellow-white fingers outspread and crooked at the tips. Mrs. Ferrari shrank at the sight of them, and gave the address. Lady Montbarry pointed contemptuously to the door—then changed her mind. 'No! not yet! you will tell Miss Lockwood what has happened, and she may refuse to see me. I will go there at once, and you shall go with me. As far as the house—not inside of it. Sit down again. I am going to ring for my maid. Turn your back to the door—your cowardly face is not fit to be seen!'

She rang the bell. The maid appeared.

'My cloak and bonnet—instantly!'

The maid produced the cloak and bonnet from the bed-room.

'A cab at the door—before I can count ten!'

The maid vanished. Lady Montbarry surveyed herself in the glass, and wheeled round again, with her cat-like suddenness, to Mrs. Ferrari.

'I look more than half dead already, don't I?' she said with a grim outburst of irony. 'Give me your arm.'

She took Mrs. Ferrari's arm, and left the room. 'You have nothing to fear, so long as you obey,' she whispered, on the way downstairs. 'You leave me at Miss Lockwood's door, and never see me again.'

In the hall, they were met by the landlady of the hotel. Lady Montbarry graciously presented her companion. 'My good friend Mrs. Ferrari; I am so glad to have seen her.' The landlady accompanied them to the door. The cab was waiting. 'Get in first, good Mrs. Ferrari,' said her ladyship; 'and tell the man where to go.'

They were driven away. Lady Montbarry's variable humour changed again. With a low groan of misery, she threw herself back in the cab. Lost in her own dark thoughts, as careless of the woman whom she had bent to her iron will as if no such person sat by her side, she preserved a sinister silence, until they reached the house where Miss Lockwood lodged. In an instant, she roused herself to action. She opened the door of the cab, and closed it again on Mrs. Ferrari, before the driver could get off his box.

‘Take that lady a mile farther on her way home!’ she said, as she paid the man his fare. The next moment she had knocked at the house-door. ‘Is Miss Lockwood at home?’ ‘Yes, ma’am.’ She stepped over the threshold—the door closed on her.

‘Which way, ma’am?’ asked the driver of the cab.

Mrs. Ferrari put her hand to her head, and tried to collect her thoughts. Could she leave her friend and benefactress helpless at Lady Montbarry’s mercy? She was still vainly endeavouring to decide on the course that she ought to follow—when a gentleman, stopping at Miss Lockwood’s door, happened to look towards the cab-window, and saw her.

‘Are you going to call on Miss Agnes too?’ he asked.

It was Henry Westwick. Mrs. Ferrari clasped her hands in gratitude as she recognised him.

‘Go in, sir!’ she cried. ‘Go in, directly. That dreadful woman is with Miss Agnes. Go and protect her!’

‘What woman?’ Henry asked.

The answer literally struck him speechless. With amazement and indignation in his face, he looked at Mrs. Ferrari as she pronounced the hated name of ‘Lady Montbarry.’ ‘I’ll see to it,’ was all he said. He knocked at the house-door; and he too, in his turn, was let in.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA.

AUGUST 1878.

The Haunted Hotel :

A MYSTERY OF MODERN VENICE.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

(The right of translation is reserved.)

THE SECOND PART (*continued*).—CHAPTER XI.

‘LADY MONTBARRY, Miss.’

Agnes was writing a letter, when the servant astonished her by announcing the Visitor’s name. Her first impulse was to refuse to see the woman who had intruded on her. But Lady Montbarry had taken care to follow close on the servant’s heels. Before Agnes could speak, she had entered the room.

‘I beg to apologise for my intrusion, Miss Lockwood. I have a question to ask you, in which I am very much interested. No one can answer me but yourself.’ In low hesitating tones, with her glittering black eyes bent modestly on the ground, Lady Montbarry opened the interview in those words.

Without answering, Agnes pointed to a chair. She could do this, and, for the time, she could do no more. All that she had read of the hidden and sinister life in the palace at Venice ; all that she had heard of Montbarry’s melancholy death and burial in a foreign land ; all that she knew of the mystery of Ferrari’s disappearance, rushed into her mind, when the black-robed figure confronted her, standing just inside the door. The strange conduct of Lady Montbarry added a new perplexity to the doubts and misgivings that troubled her. There stood the adventuress whose character had left its mark on society all over Europe—the Fury who had terrified Mrs. Ferrari at the hotel—inconceivably transformed into a timid, shrinking woman ! Lady Montbarry had not once ventured to look at Agnes, since she had made her way into the room. Advancing to take the chair that had been pointed out to her, she hesitated, put her hand on the rail, so support

herself, and still remained standing. 'Please give me a moment to compose myself,' she said faintly. Her head sank on her bosom: she stood before Agnes like a conscious culprit before a merciless judge.

The silence that followed was, literally, the silence of fear on both sides. In the midst of it, the door was opened once more—and Henry Westwick appeared.

He looked at Lady Montbarry with a moment's steady attention—bowed to her with formal politeness—and passed on in silence. At the sight of her husband's brother, the sinking spirit of the woman sprang to life again. Her drooping figure became erect. Her eyes met Westwick's look, brightly defiant. She returned his bow with an icy smile of contempt.

Henry crossed the room to Agnes.

'Is Lady Montbarry here by your invitation?' he asked quietly.

'No.'

'Do you wish to see her?'

'It is very painful to me to see her.'

He turned and looked at his sister-in-law. 'Do you hear that?' he asked coldly.

'I hear it,' she answered, more coldly still.

'Your visit is, to say the least of it, ill-timed.'

'Your interference is, to say the least of it, out of place.'

With that retort, Lady Montbarry approached Agnes. The presence of Henry Westwick seemed at once to relieve and embolden her. 'Permit me to ask my question, Miss Lockwood,' she said, with graceful courtesy. 'It is nothing to embarrass you. When the courier Ferrari applied to my late husband for employment, did you——' Her resolution failed her, before she could say more. She sank trembling into the nearest chair, and, after a moment's struggle, composed herself again. 'Did you permit Ferrari,' she resumed, 'to make sure of being chosen for our courier, by using your name?'

Agnes did not reply with her customary directness. Trifling as it was, the reference to Montbarry, proceeding from *that* woman of all others, confused and agitated her.

'I have known Ferrari's wife for many years,' she began. 'And I take an interest——'

Lady Montbarry abruptly lifted her hands with a gesture of entreaty. 'Ah, Miss Lockwood, don't waste time by talking of his wife! Answer my plain question, plainly!'

'Let me answer her,' Henry whispered. 'I will undertake to speak plainly enough.'

Agnes refused by a gesture. Lady Montbarry's interruption had roused her sense of what was due to herself. She resumed her reply in plainer terms.

'When Ferrari wrote to the late Lord Montbarry,' she said, 'he did certainly mention my name.'

Even now, she had innocently failed to see the object which her visitor had in view. Lady Montbarry's impatience became ungovernable. She started to her feet, and advanced to Agnes.

'Was it with your knowledge and permission that Ferrari used your name?' she asked. 'The whole soul of my question is in *that*. For God's sake, answer me—Yes, or No!'

'Yes.'

That one word struck Lady Montbarry as a blow might have struck her. The fierce life that had animated her face the instant before, faded out of it suddenly, and left her like a woman turned to stone. She stood, mechanically confronting Agnes, with a stillness so wrapt and perfect that not even the breath she drew was perceptible to the two persons who were looking at her.

Henry spoke to her roughly. 'Rouse yourself,' he said. 'You have received your answer.'

She looked round at him. 'I have received my Sentence,' she rejoined—and turned slowly to leave the room.

To Henry's astonishment, Agnes stopped her. 'Wait a moment, Lady Montbarry. I have something to ask on my side.'

Lady Montbarry paused on the instant—silently submissive as if she had heard a word of command. Henry drew Agnes away to the other end of the room, and remonstrated with her.

'You do wrong to call that person back,' he said.—'No,' Agnes whispered, 'I have had time to remember.'—'To remember what?—'To remember Ferrari's wife: Lady Montbarry may have heard something of the lost man.'—'Lady Montbarry may have heard, but she won't tell.'—'It may be so, Henry, but, for Emily's sake, I must try.'—Henry yielded. 'Your kindness is inexhaustible,' he said, with his admiration of her kindling in his eyes. 'Always thinking of others; never of yourself!'

Meanwhile, Lady Montbarry waited, with a resignation that could endure any delay. Agnes returned to her, leaving Henry by himself. 'Pardon me for keeping you waiting,' she said in her gentle courteous way. 'You have spoken of Ferrari. I wish to speak of him too.'

Lady Montbarry bent her head in silence. Her hand trembled as she took out her handkerchief, and passed it over her forehead. Agnes detected the trembling, and shrank back a step. 'Is the subject painful to you?' she asked timidly.

Still silent, Lady Montbarry invited her by a wave of the hand to go on. Henry approached, attentively watching his sister-in-law. Agnes went on.

‘No trace of Ferrari has been discovered in England,’ she said. ‘Have you any news of him? And will you tell me (if you have heard anything), in mercy to his wife?’

Lady Montbarry’s thin lips suddenly relaxed into their sad and cruel smile.

‘Why do you ask *me* about the lost courier?’ she said. ‘You will know what has become of him, Miss Lockwood, when the time is ripe for it.’

Agnes started. ‘I don’t understand you,’ she said. ‘How shall I know? Will some one tell me?’

‘Some one will tell you.’

Henry could keep silence no longer. ‘Perhaps, your ladyship may be the person?’ he interrupted with ironical politeness.

She answered him with contemptuous ease. ‘You may be right, Mr. Westwick. One day or another, I may be the person who tells Miss Lockwood what has become of Ferrari, if——’ She stopped; with her eyes fixed on Agnes.

‘If what?’ Henry asked.

‘If Miss Lockwood forces me to it.’

Agnes listened in astonishment. ‘Force you to it?’ she repeated. ‘How can I do that? Do you mean to say my will is stronger than yours?’

‘Do *you* mean to say that the candle doesn’t burn the moth, when the moth flies into it?’ Lady Montbarry rejoined. ‘Have you ever heard of such a thing as the fascination of terror? I am drawn to you by a fascination of terror. I have no right to visit you, I have no wish to visit you: you are my enemy. For the first time in my life, against my own will, I submit to my enemy. See! I am waiting because you told me to wait—and the fear of you (I swear it!) creeps through me while I stand here. Oh, don’t let me excite your curiosity or your pity! Follow the example of Mr. Westwick. Be hard and brutal and unforgiving, like him. Grant me my release. Tell me to go.’

The frank and simple nature of Agnes could discover but one intelligible meaning in this strange outbreak.

‘You are mistaken in thinking me your enemy,’ she said. ‘The wrong you did me when you gave your hand to Lord Montbarry was not intentionally done. I forgave you my sufferings in his lifetime. I forgive you even more freely now that he has gone.’

Henry heard her with mingled emotions of admiration and

distress. 'Say no more!' he exclaimed. 'You are too good to her; she is not worthy of it.'

The interruption passed unheeded by Lady Montbarry. The simple words in which Agnes had replied seemed to have absorbed the whole attention of this strangely-changeable woman. As she listened, her face settled slowly into an expression of hard and tearless sorrow. There was a marked change in her voice when she spoke next. It expressed that last worst resignation which has done with hope.

'You good innocent creature,' she said, 'what does your amiable forgiveness matter? What are your poor little wrongs, in the reckoning for greater wrongs which is demanded of me? I am not trying to frighten you; I am only miserable about myself. Do you know what it is to have a firm presentiment of calamity that is coming to you—and yet to hope that your own positive conviction will not prove true? When I first met you, before my marriage, and first felt your influence over me, I had that hope. It was a starveling sort of hope that lived a lingering life in me until to-day. *You* struck it dead, when you answered my question about Ferrari.'

'How have I destroyed your hopes?' Agnes asked. 'What connection is there between my permitting Ferrari to use my name to Lord Montbarry, and the strange and dreadful things you are saying to me now?'

'The time is near, Miss Lockwood, when you will discover that for yourself. In the mean while, you shall know what my fear of you is, in the plainest words I can find. On the day when I took your hero from you and blighted your life—I am firmly persuaded of it!—you were made the instrument of the retribution that my sins of many years had deserved. Oh, such things have happened before to-day! One person has, before now, been the means of innocently ripening the growth of evil in another. You have done that already—and you have more to do yet. You have still to bring me to the day of discovery, and to the punishment that is my doom. We shall meet again—here in England, or there in Venice where my husband died—and meet for the last time.'

In spite of her better sense, in spite of her natural superiority to superstitions of all kinds, Agnes was impressed by the terrible earnestness with which those words were spoken. She turned pale as she looked at Henry. 'Do *you* understand her?' she asked.

'Nothing is easier than to understand her,' he replied contemptuously. 'She knows what has become of Ferrari; and she is confusing you in a cloud of nonsense, because she daren't own the truth. Let her go!'

If a dog had been under one of the chairs, and had barked, Lady Montbarry could not have proceeded more impenetrably with the last words she had to say to Agnes.

'Advise your interesting Mrs. Ferrari to wait a little longer,' she said. 'You will know what has become of her husband, and you will tell her. There will be nothing to alarm you. Some trifling event will bring us together the next time—as trifling, I dare say, as the engagement of Ferrari. Sad nonsense, Mr. Westwick, is it not? But you make allowances for women; we all talk nonsense. Good morning, Miss Lockwood.'

She opened the door—suddenly, as if she was afraid of being called back for the second time—and left them.

CHAPTER XII.

'Do you think she is mad?' Agnes asked.

'I think she is simply wicked. False, superstitious, inveterately cruel—but not mad. I believe her main motive in coming here was to enjoy the luxury of frightening you.'

'She *has* frightened me. I am ashamed to own it—but so it is.'

Henry looked at her, hesitated for a moment, and seated himself on the sofa by her side.

'I am very anxious about you, Agnes,' he said. 'But for the fortunate chance which led me to call here to-day—who knows what that vile woman might not have said or done, if she had found you alone? My dear, you are leading a sadly unprotected solitary life. I don't like to think of it; I want to see it changed—especially after what has happened to-day. 'No! no! it is useless to tell me that you have your old nurse. She is too old; she is not in your rank of life—there is no sufficient protection in the companionship of such a person for a lady in your position. Don't mistake me, Agnes! what I say, I say in the sincerity of my devotion to you.' He paused, and took her hand. She made a feeble effort to withdraw it—and yielded. 'Will the day never come,' he pleaded, 'when the privilege of protecting you may be mine? when you will be the pride and joy of my life, as long as my life lasts?' He pressed her hand gently. She made no reply. The colour came and went on her face; her eyes were turned away from him. 'Have I been so unhappy as to offend you?' he asked.

She answered that—she said, almost in a whisper, 'No.'

'Have I distressed you?'

'You have made me think of the sad days that are gone.' She

said no more; she only tried to withdraw her hand from his for the second time. He still held it; he lifted it to his lips.

'Can I never make you think of other days than those—of the happier days to come? Or, if you must think of the time that is passed, can you not look back to the time when I first loved you?'

She sighed as he put the question. 'Spare me, Henry,' she answered sadly. 'Say no more!'

The colour rose again in her cheeks; her hand trembled in his. She looked lovely, with her eyes cast down and her bosom heaving gently. At that moment he would have given everything he had in the world to take her in his arms and kiss her. Some mysterious sympathy, passing from his hand to hers, seemed to tell her what was in his mind. She snatched her hand away, and suddenly looked up at him. The tears were in her eyes. She said nothing; she let her eyes speak for her. They warned him—without anger, without unkindness—but still they warned him to press her no further that day.

'Only tell me that I am forgiven,' he said, as he rose from the sofa.

'Yes,' she answered quietly, 'you are forgiven.'

'I have not lowered myself in your estimation, Agnes?'

'Oh, no!'

'Do you wish me to leave you?'

She rose, in her turn, from the sofa, and walked to her writing-table before she replied. The unfinished letter which she had been writing when, Lady Montbarry interrupted her, lay open on the blotting-book. As she looked at the letter, and then looked at Henry, the smile that charmed everybody showed itself in her face.

'You must not go just yet,' she said: 'I have something to tell you. I hardly know how to express it. The shortest way perhaps will be to let you find it out for yourself. You have been speaking of my lonely unprotected life here. It is not a very happy life, Henry—I own that.' She paused, observing the growing anxiety of his expression as he looked at her, with a shy satisfaction that perplexed him. 'Do you know that I have anticipated your idea?' she went on. 'I am going to make a great change in my life—if your brother Stephen and his wife will only consent to it.' She opened the desk of the writing-table while she spoke, took a letter out, and handed it to Henry.

He received it from her mechanically. Vague doubts, which he hardly understood himself, kept him silent. It was impossible that the 'change in her life' of which she had spoken could mean that she was about to be married—and yet he was conscious of a

perfectly unreasonable reluctance to open the letter. Their eyes met; she smiled again. 'Look at the address,' she said. 'You ought to know the handwriting—but I dare say you don't.'

He looked at the address. It was in the large, irregular, uncertain writing of a child. He opened the letter instantly.

'Dear Aunt Agnes,—Our governess is going away. She has had money left to her, and a house of her own. We have had cake and wine to drink her health. You promised to be our governess if we wanted another. We want you. Mamma knows nothing about this. Please come before Mamma can get another governess. Your loving Lucy, who writes this. Clara and Blanche have tried to write too. But they are too young to do it. They blot the paper.'

'Your eldest niece,' Agnes explained, as Henry looked at her in amazement. 'The children used to call me aunt when I was staying with their mother in Ireland, in the autumn. The three girls were my inseparable companions—they are the most charming children I know. It is quite true that I offered to be their governess, if they ever wanted one, on the day when I left them to return to London. I was writing to propose it to their mother, just before you came.'

'Not seriously!' Henry exclaimed.

Agnes placed her unfinished letter in his hand. Enough of it had been written to show that she did seriously propose to enter the household of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Westwick as governess to their children! Henry's bewilderment was not to be expressed in words.

'They won't believe you are in earnest,' he said.

'Why not?' Agnes asked quietly.

'You are my brother Stephen's cousin; you are his wife's old friend!'

'All the more reason, Henry, for trusting me with the charge of their children.'

'But you are their equal; you are not obliged to gain your living by teaching. There is something absurd in your entering their service as a governess!'

'What is there absurd in it? The children love me; the mother loves me; the father has shown me innumerable instances of his true friendship and regard. I am the very woman for the place—and, as to my education, I must have completely forgotten it indeed, if I am not fit to teach three children the eldest of whom is only eleven years old. You say I am their equal. Are there no other women who serve as governesses, and who are the equals of the persons whom they serve? Besides, I don't know

that I *am* their equal. Have I not heard that your brother Stephen was the next heir to the title? Will he not be the new lord? Never mind answering me! We won't dispute whether I am right or wrong in turning governess—we will wait the event. I am weary of my lonely useless existence here, and eager to make my life more happy and more useful, in the household of all others in which I should most like to have a place. If you will look again, you will see that I have these personal considerations still to urge before I finish my letter. You don't know your brother and his wife as well as I do, if you doubt their answer. I believe they have courage enough and heart enough to say Yes.'

Henry submitted without being convinced.

He was a man who disliked all eccentric departures from custom and routine; and he felt especially suspicious of the change proposed in the life of Agnes. With new interests to occupy her mind, she might be less favourably disposed to listen to him, on the next occasion when he urged his suit. The influence of the 'lonely useless existence' of which she complained, was distinctly an influence in his favour. While her heart was empty, her heart was accessible. But with his nieces in full possession of it, the clouds of doubt overshadowed his prospects. He knew the sex well enough to keep these purely selfish perplexities to himself. The waiting policy was especially the policy to pursue with a woman as sensitive as Agnes. If he once offended her delicacy he was lost. For the moment he wisely controlled himself and changed the subject.

'My little niece's letter has had an effect,' he said, 'which the child never contemplated in writing it. She has just reminded me of one of the objects that I had in calling on you to-day.'

Agnes looked at the child's letter. 'How does Lucy do that?' she asked.

'Lucy's governess is not the only lucky person who has had money left her,' Henry answered. 'Is your old nurse in the house?'

'You don't mean to say that nurse has got a legacy?'

'She has got a hundred pounds. Send for her, Agnes, while I show you the letter.'

He took a handful of letters from his pocket, and looked through them, while Agnes rang the bell. Returning to him, she noticed a printed letter among the rest, which lay open on the table. It was a 'prospectus,' and the title of it was 'Palace Hotel Company of Venice (Limited).' The two words, 'Palace' and 'Venice,' instantly recalled her mind to the unwelcome visit of

Lady Montbarry, 'What is that?' she asked, pointing to the title.

Henry suspended his search, and glanced at the prospectus. 'A really promising speculation,' he said. 'Large hotels always pay well, if they are well managed. I know the man who is appointed to be manager of this hotel when it is opened to the public; and I have such entire confidence in him that I have become one of the shareholders of the Company.'

The reply did not appear to satisfy Agnes. 'Why is the hotel called the "Palace Hotel?"' she inquired.

Henry looked at her, and at once penetrated her motive for asking the question. 'Yes,' he said, 'it is the palace that Montbarry hired at Venice; and it has been purchased by the Company to be changed into an hotel.'

Agnes turned away in silence, and took a chair at the farther end of the room. Henry had disappointed her. His income as a younger son stood in need, as she well knew, of all the additions that he could make to it by successful speculation. But she was unreasonable enough, nevertheless, to disapprove of his attempting to make money already out of the house in which his brother had died. Incapable of understanding this purely sentimental view of a plain matter of business, Henry returned to his papers, in some perplexity at the sudden change in the manner of Agnes towards him. Just as he found the letter of which he was in search, the nurse made her appearance. He glanced at Agnes, expecting that she would speak first. She never even looked up when the nurse came in. It was left to Henry to tell the old woman why the bell had summoned her to the drawing-room.

'Well, nurse,' he said, 'you have had a windfall of luck. You have had a legacy left you of a hundred pounds.'

The nurse showed no outward signs of exultation. She waited a little to get the announcement of the legacy well settled in her mind—and then she said quietly, 'Master Henry, who gives me that money, if you please?'

'My late brother, Lord Montbarry, gives it to you.' (Agnes instantly looked up, interested in the matter for the first time. Henry went on.) 'His will leaves legacies to the surviving old servants of the family. There is a letter from his lawyers, authorising you to apply to them for the money.'

In every class of society, gratitude is the rarest of all human virtues. In the nurse's class it is especially rare. Her opinion of the man who had deceived and deserted her mistress remained the same opinion still, perfectly undisturbed by the passing circumstance of the legacy.

'I wonder who reminded my lord of the old servants?' she said. 'He would never have heart enough to remember them himself!'

Agnes suddenly interposed. Nature, always abhorring monotony, institutes reserves of temper as elements in the composition of the gentlest women living. Even Agnes could, on rare occasions, be angry. The nurse's view of Montbarry's character seemed to have provoked her beyond endurance.

'If you have any sense of shame in you,' she broke out, 'you ought to be ashamed of what you have just said! Your ingratitude disgusts me. I leave you to speak with her, Henry—you won't mind it!' With this significant intimation that he too had dropped out of his customary place in her good opinion, she left the room.

The nurse received the smart reproof administered to her with every appearance of feeling rather amused by it than not. When the door had closed, this female philosopher winked at Henry.

'There's a power of obstinacy in young women,' she remarked. 'Miss Agnes wouldn't give my lord up as a bad one, even when he jilted her. And now she's sweet on him after he's dead. Say a word against him, and she fires up as you see. All obstinacy! It will wear out with time. Stick to her, Master Henry—stick to her!'

'She doesn't seem to have offended you,' said Henry.

'*She?*' the nurse repeated in amazement—'she offend me? I like her in her tantrums; it reminds me of her when she was a baby. Lord bless you! when I go to bid her good night, she'll give me a big kiss, poor dear—and say, Nurse, I didn't mean it! About this money, Master Henry? If I was younger I should spend it in dress and jewelry. But I'm too old for that. What shall I do with my legacy when I have got it?'

'Put it out at interest,' Henry suggested. 'Get so much a year for it, you know.'

'How much shall I get?' the nurse asked.

'If you put your hundred pounds into the Funds, you will get between three and four pounds a year.'

The nurse shook her head. 'Three or four pounds a year? That won't do! I want more than that. Look here, Master Henry. I don't care about this bit of money—I never did like the man who has left it to me, though he *was* your brother. If I lost it all to-morrow, I shouldn't break my heart; I'm well enough off, as it is, for the rest of my days. They say you're a speculator. Put me in for a good thing, there's a dear! Neck or nothing—and *that* for the Funds!' She snapped her fingers to express her contempt for security of investment at three per cent.

Henry produced the prospectus of the Venetian Hotel Company. 'You're a funny old woman,' he said. 'There, you dashing speculator—there is neck-or-nothing for you! You must keep it a secret from Miss Agnes, mind. I'm not at all sure that she would approve of my helping you to this investment.'

The nurse took out her spectacles. 'Six per cent. guaranteed,' she read; 'and the Directors have every reason to believe that ten per cent., or more, will be ultimately realised to the shareholders by the hotel.' 'Put me into that, Master Henry! And, wherever you go, for Heaven's sake recommend the hotel to your friends!'

So the nurse, following Henry's mercenary example, had *her* pecuniary interest, too, in the house in which Lord Montbarry had died.

Three days passed before Henry was able to visit Agnes again. In that time, the little cloud between them had entirely passed away. Agnes received him with even more than her customary kindness. She was in better spirits than usual. Her letter to Mrs. Stephen Westwick had been answered by return of post; and her proposal had been joyfully accepted, with one modification. She was to visit the Westwicks for a month—and, if she really liked teaching the children, she was then to be governess, aunt, and cousin, all in one—and was only to go away in an event which her friends in Ireland persisted in contemplating, the event of her marriage.

'You see I was right,' she said to Henry.

He was still incredulous. 'Are you really going?' he asked.

'I am going next week.'

'When shall I see you again?'

'You know you are always welcome at your brother's house. You can see me when you like.' She held out her hand. 'Pardon me for leaving you—I am beginning to pack up already.'

Henry tried to kiss her at parting. She drew back directly.

'Why not? I am your cousin,' he said.

'I don't like it,' she answered.

Henry looked at her, and submitted. Her refusal to grant him his privilege as a cousin was a good sign—it was indirectly an act of encouragement to him in the character of her lover.

On the first day in the new week, Agnes left London on her way to Ireland. As the event proved, this was not destined to be the end of her journey. The way to Ireland was only the first stage on her way to the palace at Venice.

THE THIRD PART.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN the spring of the year 1861, Agnes was established at the country-seat of her good friends—now promoted (on the death of the first lord, without offspring) to be the new Lord and Lady Montbarry. The old nurse was not separated from her mistress. A place, suited to her time of life, had been found for her in the pleasant Irish household. She was perfectly happy in her new sphere; and she spent her first half-year's dividend from the Venice Hotel Company, with characteristic prodigality, in presents for the children.

Early in the year, also, the Directors of the life insurance offices submitted to circumstances, and paid the ten thousand pounds. Immediately afterwards, the widow of the first Lord Montbarry (otherwise, the dowager Lady Montbarry) left England, with Baron Rivar, for the United States. The Baron's object was announced, in the scientific columns of the newspapers, to be investigation into the present state of experimental chemistry in the great American republic. His sister informed inquiring friends that she accompanied him, in the hope of finding consolation in change of scene after the bereavement that had fallen on her. Hearing this news from Henry Westwick (then paying a visit at his brother's house), Agnes was conscious of a certain sense of relief. 'With the Atlantic between us,' she said, 'surely I have done with that terrible woman now!'

Barely a week passed after those words had been spoken, before an event happened which reminded Agnes of 'the terrible woman' once more.

On that day, Henry's engagements had obliged him to return to London. He had ventured, on the morning of his departure, to press his suit once more on Agnes; and the children, as he had anticipated, proved to be innocent obstacles in the way of his success. On the other hand, he had privately secured a firm ally in his sister-in-law. 'Have a little patience,' the new Lady Montbarry had said; 'and leave me to turn the influence of the children in the right direction; they can persuade her to listen to you—and they shall!'

The two ladies had accompanied Henry, and some other guests who went away at the same time, to the railway station, and had just driven back to the house, when the servant announced that 'a person of the name of Rolland was waiting to see her ladyship.'

'Is it a woman?'

'Yes, my lady.'

Young Lady Montbarry turned to Agnes.

'This is the very person,' she said, 'whom your lawyer thought likely to help him, when he was trying to trace the lost courier.'

'You don't mean the English maid who was with Lady Montbarry at Venice?'

'My dear! don't speak of Montbarry's horrid widow by the name which is *my* name now. Stephen and I have arranged to call her by her foreign title, before she was married. I am "Lady Montbarry," and she is "the Countess." In that way there will be no confusion.—Yes, Mrs. Rolland was in my service before she became the Countess's maid. She was a perfectly trustworthy person, with one defect that obliged me to send her away—a sullen temper which led to perpetual complaints of her in the servants' hall. Would you like to see her?'

Agnes accepted the proposal, in the faint hope of getting some information for the courier's wife. The complete defeat of every attempt to trace the lost man had been accepted as final by Mrs. Ferrari. She had deliberately arrayed herself in widow's mourning; and was earning her livelihood in an employment which the unwearied kindness of Agnes had procured for her in London. The last chance of penetrating the mystery of Ferrari's disappearance seemed to rest now on what Ferrari's former fellow-servant might be able to tell. With highly-wrought expectations, Agnes followed her friend into the room in which Mrs. Rolland was waiting.

A tall, bony woman, in the autumn of life, with sunken eyes and iron-grey hair, rose stiffly from her chair, and saluted the ladies with stern submission as they opened the door. A person of unblemished character, evidently—but not without visible drawbacks. Big bushy eyebrows, an awfully deep and solemn voice, a harsh unbending manner, a complete absence in her figure of the undulating lines characteristic of the sex, presented Virtue in this excellent person under its least alluring aspect. Strangers, on a first introduction to her, were accustomed to wonder why she was not a man.

'Are you pretty well, Mrs. Rolland?'

'I am as well as I can expect to be, my lady, at my time of life.'

'Is there anything I can do for you?'

'Your ladyship can do me a great favour, if you will please speak to my character while I was in your service. I am offered a place, to wait on an invalid lady who has lately come to live in this neighbourhood.'

‘Ah, yes—I have heard of her. A Mrs. Carbury, with a very pretty niece I am told. But, Mrs. Rolland, you left my service some time ago. Mrs. Carbury will surely expect you to refer to the last mistress by whom you were employed.’

A flash of virtuous indignation irradiated Mrs. Rolland’s sunken eyes. She coughed before she answered, as if her ‘last mistress’ stuck in her throat.

‘I have explained to Mrs. Carbury, my lady, that the person I last served—I really cannot give her my title in your ladyship’s presence!—has left England for America. Mrs. Carbury knows that I quitted the person of my own free will, and knows why, and approves of my conduct so far. A word from your ladyship will be amply sufficient to get me the situation.’

‘Very well, Mrs. Rolland, I have no objection to be your reference, under the circumstances. Mrs. Carbury will find me at home to-morrow until two o’clock.’

‘Mrs. Carbury is not well enough to leave the house, my lady. Her niece, Miss Haldane, will call and make the inquiries, if your ladyship has no objection.’

‘I have not the least objection. The pretty niece carries her own welcome with her. Wait a minute, Mrs. Rolland. This lady is Miss Lockwood—my husband’s cousin, and my friend. She is anxious to speak to you about the courier who was in the late Lord Montbarry’s service at Venice.’

Mrs. Rolland’s bushy eyebrows frowned in stern disapproval of the new topic of conversation. ‘I regret to hear it, my lady,’ was all she said.

‘Perhaps, you have not been informed of what happened after you left Venice?’ Agnes ventured to add. ‘Ferrari left the palace secretly; and he has never been heard of since.’

Mrs. Rolland mysteriously closed her eyes—as if to exclude some vision of the lost courier which was of a nature to disturb a respectable woman. ‘Nothing that Mr. Ferrari could do would surprise me,’ she replied in her deepest bass tones.

‘You speak rather harshly of him,’ said Agnes.

Mrs. Rolland suddenly opened her eyes again. ‘I speak harshly of nobody without reason,’ she said. ‘Mr. Ferrari behaved to me, Miss Lockwood, as no man living has ever behaved—before or since.’

‘What did he do?’

Mrs. Rolland answered, with a stony stare of horror:—‘He took liberties with me.’

Young Lady Montbarry suddenly turned aside, and put her handkerchief over her mouth in convulsions of suppressed laughter.

Mrs. Rolland went on, with a grim enjoyment of the bewilderment which her reply had produced in Agnes: 'And when I insisted on an apology, Miss, he had the audacity to say that the life at the palace was dull, and he didn't know how else to amuse himself!'

'I am afraid I have hardly made myself understood,' said Agnes. 'I am not speaking to you out of any interest in Ferrari. Are you aware that he is married?'

'I pity his wife,' said Mrs. Rolland.

'She is naturally in great grief about him,' Agnes proceeded.

'She ought to thank God she is rid of him,' Mrs. Rolland interposed.

Agnes still persisted. 'I have known Mrs. Ferrari from her childhood, and I am sincerely anxious to help her in this matter. Did you notice anything, while you were at Venice, that would account for her husband's extraordinary disappearance? On what sort of terms, for instance, did he live with his master and mistress?'

'On terms of familiarity with his mistress,' said Mrs. Rolland, 'which were simply sickening to a respectable English servant. She used to encourage him to talk to her about all his affairs—how he got on with his wife, and how pressed he was for money, and such like—just as if they were equals. Contemptible—that's what I call it.'

'And his master?' Agnes continued. 'How did Ferrari get on with Lord Montbarry?'

'My lord used to live shut up with his studies and his sorrows,' Mrs. Rolland answered, with a hard solemnity expressive of respect for his lordship's memory. 'Mr. Ferrari got his money when it was due; and he cared for nothing else. "If I could afford it, I would leave the place too; but I can't afford it." Those were the last words he said to me, on the morning when I left the palace. I made no reply. After what had happened (on that other occasion) I was naturally not on speaking terms with Mr. Ferrari.'

'Can you really tell me nothing which will throw any light on this matter?'

'Nothing,' said Mrs. Rolland, with an undisguised relish of the disappointment that she was inflicting.

'There was another member of the family at Venice,' Agnes resumed, determined to sift the question to the bottom while she had the chance. 'There was Baron Rivar.'

Mrs. Rolland lifted her large hands, covered with rusty black gloves, in mute protest against the introduction of Baron Rivar as

a subject of inquiry. 'Are you aware, Miss,' she began, 'that I left my place in consequence of what I observed——?'

Agnes stopped her there. 'I only wanted to ask,' she explained, 'if anything was said or done by Baron Rivar which might account for Ferrari's strange conduct.'

'Nothing that I know of,' said Mrs. Rolland. 'The Baron and Mr. Ferrari (if I may use such an expression) were "birds of a feather," so far as I could see—I mean, one was as unprincipled as the other. I am a just woman; and I will give you an example. Only the day before I left, I heard the Baron say (through the open door of his room while I was passing along the corridor), "Ferrari, I want a thousand pounds. What would you do for a thousand pounds?" And I heard Mr. Ferrari answer, "Anything, sir, as long as I was not found out." And then they both burst out laughing. I heard no more than that. Judge for yourself, Miss.'

Agnes reflected for a moment. A thousand pounds was the sum that had been sent to Mrs. Ferrari in the anonymous letter. Was that enclosure in any way connected, as a result, with the conversation between the Baron and Ferrari? It was useless to press any more inquiries on Mrs. Rolland. She could give no further information which was of the slightest importance to the object in view. There was no alternative but to grant her her dismissal. One more effort had been made to find a trace of the lost man—and once again the effort had failed.

They were a family party at the dinner-table that day. The only guest left in the house was a nephew of the new Lord Montbarry—the eldest son of his sister, Lady Barville. Lady Montbarry could not resist telling the story of the first (and last) attack made on the virtue of Mrs. Rolland, with a comically-exact imitation of Mrs. Rolland's deep and dismal voice. Being asked by her husband what was the object which had brought that formidable person to the house, she naturally mentioned the expected visit of Miss Haldane. Arthur Barville, unusually silent and pre-occupied so far, suddenly struck into the conversation with a burst of enthusiasm. 'Miss Haldane is the most charming girl in all Ireland!' he said. 'I caught sight of her yesterday, over the wall of her garden, as I was riding by. What time is she coming to-morrow? Before two? I'll look into the drawing-room by accident—I am dying to be introduced to her!'

Agnes was amused by his enthusiasm. 'Are you in love with Miss Haldane already?' she asked.

Arthur answered gravely, 'It's no joking matter. I have been

all day at the garden wall, waiting to see her again! It depends on Miss Haldane to make me the happiest or the wretchedest man living.'

'You foolish boy! How can you talk such nonsense?'

He was talking nonsense undoubtedly. But, if Agnes had only known it, he was doing something more than that. He was innocently leading her another stage nearer on the way to Venice.

CHAPTER XIV.

As the summer months advanced, the transformation of the Venetian palace into the modern hotel proceeded rapidly towards completion.

The outside of the building, with its fine Palladian front looking on the canal, was wisely left unaltered. Inside, as a matter of necessity, the rooms were almost rebuilt—so far at least as the size and the arrangement of them were concerned. The vast saloons were partitioned off into 'apartments' containing three or four rooms each. The broad corridors in the upper regions afforded spare space enough for rows of little bedchambers, devoted to servants and to travellers with limited means. Nothing was spared but the solid floors and the finely-carved ceilings. These last, in excellent preservation as to workmanship, merely required cleaning, and regilding here and there, to add greatly to the beauty and importance of the best rooms in the hotel. The only exception to the complete re-organisation of the interior was at one extremity of the edifice, on the first and second floors. Here there happened, in each case, to be rooms of such comparatively moderate size, and so attractively decorated, that the architect suggested leaving them as they were. It was afterwards discovered that these were no other than the apartments respectively occupied by Lord Montbarry (on the first floor), and by Baron Rivar (on the second). The room in which Montbarry had died was still fitted up as a bedroom, and was now distinguished as Number Fourteen. The room above it, in which the Baron had slept, took its place on the hotel-register as Number Thirty-Eight. With the ornaments on the walls and ceilings cleaned and brightened up, and with the heavy old-fashioned beds, chairs, and tables replaced by bright, pretty, and luxurious modern furniture, these two promised to be at once the most attractive and the most comfortable bedchambers in the hotel. As for the once-desolate and disused ground floor of the building, it was now transformed, by means of splendid dining-rooms, reception-rooms, billiard-rooms, and smoking-rooms, into a palace by itself. Even the dungeon-like vaults

beneath, now lighted and ventilated on the most approved modern plan, had been turned as if by magic into kitchens, servants' offices, ice-rooms, and wine cellars, worthy of the splendour of the grandest hotel in Italy, in the now bygone period of seventeen years since.

Passing from the lapse of the summer months at Venice, to the lapse of the summer months in Ireland, it is next to be recorded that Mrs. Rolland obtained the situation of attendant on the invalid Mrs. Carbury; and that the fair Miss Haldane, like a female Cæsar, came, saw, and conquered, on her first day's visit to the new Lord Montbarry's house.

The ladies were as loud in her praises as Arthur Barville himself. Lord Montbarry declared that she was the only perfectly pretty woman he had ever seen, who was really unconscious of her own attractions. The old nurse said she looked as if she had just stepped out of a picture, and wanted nothing but a gilt frame round her to make her complete. Miss Haldane, on her side, returned from her first visit to the Montbarrys charmed with her new acquaintances. Later on the same day, Arthur called with an offering of fruit and flowers for Mrs. Carbury, and with instructions to ask if she was well enough to receive Lord and Lady Montbarry and Miss Lockwood on the morrow. In a week's time, the two households were on the friendliest terms. Mrs. Carbury, confined to the sofa by a spinal malady, had been hitherto dependent on her niece for one of the few pleasures she could enjoy, the pleasure of having the best new novels read to her as they came out. Discovering this, Arthur volunteered to relieve Miss Haldane, at intervals, in the office of reader. He was clever at mechanical contrivances of all sorts, and he introduced improvements in Mrs. Carbury's couch, and in the means of conveying her from the bedchamber to the drawing-room, which alleviated the poor lady's sufferings and brightened her gloomy life. With these claims on the gratitude of the aunt, aided by the personal advantages which he unquestionably possessed, Arthur advanced rapidly in the favour of the charming niece. She was, it is needless to say, perfectly well aware that he was in love with her, while he was himself modestly reticent on the subject—so far as words went. But she was not equally quick in penetrating the nature of her own feeling towards Arthur. Watching the two young people with keen powers of observation, necessarily concentrated on them by the complete seclusion of her life, the invalid lady discovered signs of roused sensibility in Miss Haldane, when Arthur was present, which had never yet shown themselves in her social relations with other admirers eager to pay their addresses

to her. Having drawn her own conclusions in private, Mrs. Carbury took the first favourable opportunity (in Arthur's interests), of putting them to the test.

'I don't know what I shall do,' she said one day, 'when Arthur goes away.'

Miss Haldane looked up quickly from her work. 'Surely he is not going to leave us!' she exclaimed.

'My dear! he has already stayed at his uncle's house a month longer than he intended. His father and mother naturally expect to see him at home again.'

Miss Haldane met this difficulty with a suggestion, which could only have proceeded from a judgment already disturbed by the ravages of the tender passion. 'Why can't his father and mother go and see him at Lord Montbarry's?' she asked. 'Sir Theodore's place is only thirty miles away, and Lady Barville is Lord Montbarry's sister. They needn't stand on ceremony.'

'They may have other engagements,' Mrs. Carbury remarked.

'My dear aunt, we don't know that! Suppose you ask Arthur?'

'Suppose *you* ask him?'

Miss Haldane bent her head again over her work. Suddenly as it was done, her aunt had seen her face—and her face betrayed her.

When Arthur came the next day, Mrs. Carbury said a word to him in private, while her niece was in the garden. The last new novel lay neglected on the table. Arthur followed Miss Haldane into the garden. The next day he wrote home, enclosing in his letter a photograph of Miss Haldane. Before the end of the week, Sir Theodore and Lady Barville arrived at Lord Montbarry's, and formed their own judgment of the fidelity of the portrait. They had themselves married early in life—and, strange to say, they did not object on principle to the early marriages of other people. The question of age being thus disposed of, the course of true love had no other obstacles to encounter. Miss Haldane was an only child, and was possessed of an ample fortune. Arthur's career at the university had been creditable, but certainly not brilliant enough to present his withdrawal in the light of a disaster. As Sir Theodore's eldest son, his position was already made for him. He was two-and-twenty years of age; and the young lady was eighteen. There was really no producible reason for keeping the lovers waiting, and no excuse for deferring the wedding-day beyond the first week in September. In the interval while the bride and bridegroom would be necessarily absent on the inevitable tour abroad, a sister of Mrs. Carbury volunteered to stay with her



'Her face betrayed her.'

during the temporary separation from her niece. On the conclusion of the honeymoon, the young couple were to return to Ireland, and were to establish themselves in Mrs. Carbury's spacious and comfortable house.

These arrangements were decided upon early in the month of August. About the same date, the last alterations in the old palace at Venice were completed. The rooms were dried by steam; the cellars were stocked; the manager collected round him his army of skilled servants; and the new hotel was advertised all over Europe to open in October.

CHAPTER XV.

(Miss Agnes Lockwood to Mrs. Ferrari.)

'I PROMISED to give you some account, dear Emily, of the marriage of Mr. Arthur Barville and Miss Haldane. It took place ten days since. But I have had so many things to look after in the absence of the master and mistress of this house, that I am only able to write to you to-day.

'The invitations to the wedding were limited to members of the families, on either side, in consideration of the ill health of Miss Haldane's aunt. On the side of the Montbarry family, there were present, besides Lord and Lady Montbarry, Sir Theodore and Lady Barville; Mrs. Norbury (whom you may remember as his lordship's second sister); and Mr. Francis Westwick, and Mr. Henry Westwick. The three children and I attended the ceremony as bridesmaids. We were joined by two young ladies, cousins of the bride and very agreeable girls. Our dresses were white, trimmed with green in honour of Ireland; and we each had a handsome gold bracelet given to us as a present from the bridegroom. If you add to the persons whom I have already mentioned, the elder members of Mrs. Carbury's family, and the old servants in both houses—privileged to drink the healths of the married pair at the lower end of the room—you will have the list of the company at the wedding-breakfast complete.

'The weather was perfect, and the ceremony (with music) was beautifully performed. As for the bride, no words can describe how lovely she looked, or how well she went through it all. We were very merry at the breakfast, and the speeches went off on the whole quite well enough. The last speech, before the party broke up, was made by Mr. Henry Westwick, and was the best of all. He made a happy suggestion, at the end, which has produced a very unexpected change in my life here.

‘As well as I remember, he concluded in these words:—“On one point, we are all agreed—we are sorry that the parting hour is near, and we should be glad to meet again. Why should we not meet again? This is the autumn time of the year; we are most of us leaving home for the holidays. What do you say (if you have no engagements that will prevent it) to joining our young married friends before the close of their tour, and renewing the social success of this delightful breakfast by another festival in honour of the honeymoon? The bride and bridegroom are going to Germany and the Tyrol, on their way to Italy. I propose that we allow them a month to themselves, and that we arrange to meet them afterwards in the North of Italy—say at Venice.”

‘This proposal was received with great applause, which was changed into shouts of laughter by no less a person than my dear old nurse. The moment Mr. Westwick pronounced the word “Venice,” she started up among the servants at the lower end of the room, and called out at the top of her voice, “Go to our hotel, ladies and gentlemen! We get six per cent. on our money already; and if you will only crowd the place and call for the best of everything, it will be ten per cent. in our pockets in no time. Ask Master Henry!”

‘Appealed to in this irresistible manner, Mr. Westwick had no choice but to explain that he was concerned as a shareholder in a new Hotel Company at Venice, and that he had invested a small sum of money for the nurse (not very considerably, as I think) in the speculation. Hearing this, the company, by way of humouring the joke, drank a new toast:—Success to the nurse’s hotel, and a speedy rise in the dividend!

‘When the conversation returned in due time to the more serious question of the proposed meeting at Venice, difficulties began to present themselves, caused of course by invitations for the autumn which many of the guests had already accepted. Only two members of Mrs. Carbury’s family were at liberty to keep the proposed appointment. On our side we were more at leisure to do as we pleased. Mr. Henry Westwick decided to go to Venice in advance of the rest, to test the accommodation of the new hotel on the opening day. Mrs. Norbury and Mr. Francis Westwick volunteered to follow him; and, after some persuasion, Lord and Lady Montbarry consented to a species of compromise. His lordship could not conveniently spare time enough for the journey to Venice, but he and Lady Montbarry arranged to accompany Mrs. Norbury and Mr. Francis Westwick as far on their way to Italy as Paris. Five days since, they took their departure to meet their travelling companions in London; leaving me here in charge of

the three dear children. They begged hard, of course, to be taken with papa and mamma. But it was thought better not to interrupt the progress of their education, and not to expose them (especially the two younger girls) to the fatigues of travelling.

‘I have had a charming letter from the bride, this morning, dated Cologne. You cannot think how artlessly and prettily she assures me of her happiness. Some people, as they say in Ireland, are born to good luck—and I think Arthur Barville is one of them.

‘When you next write, I hope to hear that you are in better health and spirits, and that you continue to like your employment. Believe me, sincerely your friend,—A. L.’

Agnes had just closed and directed her letter, when the eldest of her three pupils entered the room with the startling announcement that Lord Montbarry’s travelling-servant had arrived from Paris! Alarmed by the idea that some misfortune had happened, she ran out to meet the man in the hall. Her face told him how seriously he had frightened her, before she could speak. ‘There’s nothing wrong, Miss,’ he hastened to say. ‘My lord and my lady are enjoying themselves at Paris. They only want you and the young ladies to be with them.’ Saying these amazing words, he handed to Agnes a letter from Lady Montbarry.

‘Dearest Agnes,’ (she read), ‘I am so charmed with the delightful change in my life—it is six years, remember, since I last travelled on the Continent—that I have exerted all my fascinations to persuade Lord Montbarry to go on to Venice. And, what is more to the purpose, I have actually succeeded! He has just gone to his room to write the necessary letters of excuse in time for the post to England. May you have as good a husband, my dear, when your time comes! In the mean while, the one thing wanting now to make my happiness complete, is to have you and the darling children with us. Montbarry is just as miserable without them as I am—though he doesn’t confess it so freely. You will have no difficulties to trouble you. Louis will deliver these hurried lines, and will take care of you on the journey to Paris. Kiss the children for me a thousand times—and never mind their education for the present! Pack up instantly, my dear, and I will be fonder of you than ever. Your affectionate friend, Adela Montbarry.’

Agnes folded up the letter; and, feeling the need of composing herself, took refuge for a few minutes in her own room.

Her first natural sensations of surprise and excitement at the prospect of going to Venice were succeeded by impressions of a less agreeable kind. With the recovery of her customary composure came the unwelcome remembrance of the parting words spoken to

her by Montbarry's widow:—'We shall meet again—here in England, or there in Venice where my husband died—and meet for the last time.'

It was an odd coincidence, to say the least of it, that the march of events should be unexpectedly taking Agnes to Venice, after those words had been spoken! Was the woman of the mysterious warnings and the wild black eyes, still thousands of miles away in America? Or was the march of events taking *her* unexpectedly, too, on the journey to Venice? Agnes started out of her chair, ashamed of even the momentary concession to superstition which was implied by the mere presence of such questions as these in her mind.

She rang the bell, and sent for her little pupils, and announced their approaching departure to the household. The noisy delight of the children, the inspiriting effort of packing up in a hurry, roused all her energies. She dismissed her own absurd misgivings from consideration, with the contempt that they deserved. She worked as only women *can* work, when their hearts are in what they do. The travellers reached Dublin that day, in time for the boat to England. Two days later, they were with Lord and Lady Montbarry at Paris.

(To be continued.)

The Moon's Myriad Small Craters.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

SINCE Galileo first turned a telescope upon the moon, the lunar craters have been among the wonders and mysteries of astronomy. It is not merely or even chiefly the vast size of some of these objects which excites astonishment. Indeed, it might almost be inferred from what we know of the moon's size and general structure, that her volcanic energies would be more effective, though not greater, than those of our own earth. The really surprising characteristic of the lunar surface is the amazing number of the lunar craters. Even Galileo, though with his weak telescope he could see but a few of the craters which really exist in the moon, compared those in the south-western part of the moon's disc to the eyes in a peacock's tail. With each increase of telescopic power, more and more craters have been seen. Regions supposed to be comparatively smooth have been found, on closer scrutiny with higher powers or under more favourable conditions, to be covered with minute craters. The slopes of the larger craters, even in some cases their floors, have been found to be strewn with small crater-shaped depressions. In fine, almost the whole surface of the moon may be said to be pitted with depressions of all sizes, from mighty gulfs three or four hundred miles across, down to minute saucer-shaped shallows, such as only the most powerful telescopes will reveal.

I propose to enter here into a brief consideration of the probable cause of the smaller lunar craters. Unquestionably the feature may be regarded as marking a characteristic distinction between the moon and our own earth. It may well be that the moon is an old world, while our earth is comparatively young; but, for my own part, I cannot consider that the earth can come during the progress even of millions of years to resemble the moon in details, however closely she may hereafter resemble the moon in general respects—in the absence of water for instance, in the tenuity of her atmosphere, and so forth.

The course I propose to follow is one which, I think, may with advantage be pursued in a great number of cases in which as yet it has been little followed. Starting with the views now generally entertained respecting the origin and structure of the solar system, I propose to inquire what might in all probability

be expected to happen in the special case of our own moon; comparing the results to which we seem led, in this way of viewing the matter, with the results of actual observation. In other words, I am going to follow an *à priori* method of reasoning, testing the conclusions to which it may lead by *à posteriori* considerations.

It is now generally admitted that the various members of the solar system reached their present condition by processes of development. Few, however, among those who have studied the theory of cosmical evolutions for themselves, are disposed to accept unquestioningly Laplace's idea that the whole solar system was once a great mass of gaseous matter. It is only, indeed, by carefully closing the mental eye to the results of modern physical researches, that a theory of the kind can for a moment be entertained. I will not here consider the multitudinous objections against the so-called nebular hypothesis, regarded as the sole hypothesis of the origin of the solar system. Nor, on the other hand, will I consider here in detail the arguments in favour of the theory that the various members of the solar system acquired no small portion of their present bulk by a process of aggregation. Let it suffice to mention that the theory of planetary and solar growth, by the gathering in, during past ages, of immense quantities of meteoric and cometic matter, is one which has this immense advantage over the nebular theory, that it assumes the former action of a process which is going on at this present time; while also, as regards the materials forming the masses of the sun and planets, this theory leads to inferences according well with known facts.

I must, however, premise that neither the aggregation theory alone nor the condensation theory alone can fully explain the observed present condition of the solar system. We must admit on the one hand that the several members of this system, including the sun, gathered in their substance in large amount from without. But we must also admit the former vaporous condition of the sun and planets, not indeed exactly in the way indicated by Laplace, for these bodies never could have had the enormous extension his theory required and yet have retained coherence; but that they were formerly far more expanded than at present, and were thus of very small density, may be regarded as to all intents and purposes certain. Indeed, the aggregation theory would be insufficient to account for the formation of even a small portion of each planet's mass, unless we remembered that in the earlier stages of their existence the several planets were vaporous, and therefore much larger than in their later solid condition. For it would only be when thus expanded that they would gather, in their

orbital motion around the sun, a sufficient quantity of meteoric or cometic matter. At present, for instance, our own earth, though she gathers in some 400 millions of meteors in the course of each year, yet gathers a quantity of matter so small compared with her own substance that in the course of 400 millions of years the earth's diameter would be increased only by a single inch. When the earth had a much smaller mass than she has now, however, but that mass vaporous and of small density, she would gather in many thousand times as much matter in each circuit round the sun, apart always from the fact that in those remote times the quantity of meteoric matter as yet not gathered in was many thousand times greater than it is at present.

Now, we have in considerations such as these the means of explaining in some degree the peculiarities of the moon's state.

In the first place, we must set the period during which the moon's globe was being fashioned by cosmic forces in a far more remote antiquity even than the corresponding period of the earth's history. How far back the last-named period should be set is not very easily guessed even in the roughest manner. According to geologists, the interval during which the earth's crust has in general respects been in the same state as at present, must lie between 400 million years and 20 million years. The preceding period, during which the crust was cooling from the heat it possessed when first formed to a temperature such that living creatures could exist upon the crust, must have lasted at least 300 millions of years. The period preceding that again, when the earth had no crust, but was almost entirely vaporous, lasted probably many hundred millions of years. It must have been during this remotest of all the periods of the earth's own history, that the moon was formed. But she must have been detached from the earth's mass, or rather left behind by the retreating vaporous mass of the earth, very early in this first stage of the earth's existence.

Whether at this time the moon (which in any case contained far less matter than she does now) existed as a single mass or as a number of small masses scattered round a ring-shaped region, is a point on which different views may be entertained. For my own part, though I cannot doubt that the substance of the moon once formed a ring around the earth, I think there is good reason for believing that when the earth's vaporous mass, receding, left the moon's mass behind, this mass must already have been gathered up into a single vaporous globe. My chief reason for thinking thus, is that I cannot on any other supposition find a sufficient explanation of one of the most singular characteristics of our

satellite—her rotation on her axis in the same mean time, exactly, as she circuits around the earth.

This peculiarity in the moon's rotation is generally treated as though it were a natural and, so to speak, an antecedently likely arrangement, instead of being one of a very remarkable and unlikely nature. It is stated, very justly, that if the moon's original rate of turning had nearly coincided with her rate of travelling round the earth, in such sort that she would very nearly keep one side directed towards the earth during a single revolution, the earth's attraction on the elongated body of the moon would so operate as to compel the moon always to keep that side earthwards. The longer axis of the moon would sway backwards and forwards on either side of a line directed towards the earth, but would not be carried altogether round so as to bring the farther side of the moon eventually into full view. And as we know that such swayings, if they really take place, are very slight (for what is called the moon's libration or balancing has nothing to do with the swaying I refer to), it follows that originally the moon's rotation must have agreed very closely indeed with her rotation. All this is correct enough; but what is commonly left unnoticed is the exceedingly improbable nature of the imagined coincidence, if the moon's rate of rotation and her rate of revolution had been independently communicated to her.

Professor Grant, in his fine work the 'History of Physical Astronomy,' speaks of this coincidence as a relation which, though difficult to explain by the doctrine of chances, becomes very interesting and suggestive when it is considered as the result of Supreme Intelligence. But that method of dealing with the difficulty is not likely to be acceptable in these times, when men regard all the facts ascertained by observation as belonging to the domain of science. There is not a single department of scientific research in which men might not be checked at the outset by an explanation of that sort. Newton asked, Why does the moon travel round the earth and the earth round the sun? and he proceeded in the scientific manner to find out. If he had been contented to answer, It pleased the Supreme Intelligence that these bodies should move precisely as they do, he would have manifested the fulness of his faith, but he would have lost the opportunity of effecting a very noble discovery, one too which affords grander conceptions of the mechanism of the universe than the mere motions which it explains. So here, in the case of the moon's rotation, it sounds well, perhaps, to say that we accept the observed fact as evidence of the wisdom of the Supreme Intelligence, and do not seek to know how it was brought about; but this submission of the intellect to

faith implies not only a certain intellectual languor, but also a doubtful, hesitating faith. I confess that for my own part I prefer the honest bluntness with which my valued friend Professor Newcomb presents this matter. 'That the adjustment,' he says, 'should be a mere matter of chance, without any physical cause to produce it, is almost infinitely improbable, while to suppose it to result from the mere arbitrary will of the Creator, is contrary to all scientific philosophy.'

Now, there is a circumstance in the condition and movements of our own earth indicating a way by which the moon might have attained that peculiar rate of rotation. The tidal wave, which, roughly speaking, may be said to sweep twice a day round the earth in a direction contrary to her rotation, exerts a certain exceedingly small effect in slowing her rotation-rate, and thus in lengthening her day. This effect is so small that many millions of years must elapse before the day would be doubled in length, and many millions of millions of years before the earth would turn at such a rate as to present always the same face towards the moon, even if the present lengthening of the day continued constantly, instead of gradually diminishing from its present exceedingly minute amount. Now, if we suppose the moon to have existed for millions of millions of years, and to have had during the greater part of that time a deep ocean in which tides would be raised by the earth's attraction, we can understand the possibility that an original rotation of the moon at something like the earth's present rate of turning might have been gradually reduced until at length the present slow rate of turning—once in $27\frac{1}{3}$ days—had been attained to. But we require most tremendous time-intervals on such a theory, and moreover we require that the moon's condition should at one time and for a long time have been exceedingly unlike her present condition. The former difficulty is more serious than the latter; for it is almost impossible to set back the formation of the moon farther than a few thousands, or at the most tens of thousands, of millions of years, whereas this theory would require that she should have been the scene of tidal disturbance during millions of millions of years.

If we suppose that her own mass was wholly or partially fluid for millions of years, we to some degree escape this difficulty, for the tides which would in that case have been raised by the earth would have been far larger than mere tides in the lunar seas. Formerly this was the explanation which seemed to me the most probable. I find that Professor Newcomb regards it with some degree of favour. 'If the moon were once,' he says 'in a partially fluid state, and rotated on her axis in a period different from her present

one, then the enormous tides produced by the attraction of the earth, combined with the centrifugal force, would be accompanied by a friction which would gradually retard the rate of rotation, until it was reduced to the point of exact coincidence with the rate of revolution round the earth as we now find it. We therefore see in the present state of things a certain amount of probable evidence that the moon was once in a state of partial fluidity.'

But while I still regard this theory as the true one, I recognise in a yet earlier stage of the moon's development the most effective part of the earth's action in modifying the rate of the moon's rotation. When the moon was in great part gaseous, at which time the earth was almost entirely gaseous, and probably extended beyond the mass whence one day the moon was to be formed, this mass would be compelled to rotate very nearly in the same time as it revolved around the earth's centre. It may be compared to a mass of matter carried round by a whirlpool. Such a mass might have a slow independent rotation in the fluid; but, speaking generally, we may describe its motion as corresponding to that which it would have if the fluid were so thick and viscid as only to allow the mass to move with it as it whirled round. If this were so in the moon's case, then when the contracting mass of the earth left the moon outside, the moon would have just such a rate of rotation as she has at present—that is, she would turn once on her axis as she circled once round the earth. And though, as the moon contracted, her rate of rotation would tend to alter, the action of the earth would be competent to overcome this tendency, compelling the moon to move always with the same face directed earthwards.

Though there are difficulties in the theory thus presented, and though indeed it is altogether unlikely that the exact correspondence described in the preceding paragraph ever really existed, I apprehend that there is no real objection to the theory that the observed peculiarity of the moon's rotation was chiefly brought about in this way—that is, while the moon's mass was in great part vaporous. In a later stage, when the moon's mass was chiefly fluid, another large share of the work would be done. Only a very small part would thus be left for the time when the moon's surface had become solid but was still swept by ocean tides. In this way we not only attain an explanation which accords with accepted views respecting the past condition of the moon, as one of the members of the solar system, but we escape the necessity of imagining periods of time so long that even the tremendous periods which science recognises as appertaining to the past of our solar system seem small by comparison. For it is certain that a globe

like the moon, having oceans like those of our own earth, and rotating once in twenty-four hours, would not be compelled by the earth's attraction to rotate once a month in less than a trillion (a million million millions) of years.

It is well to notice, however, that no matter what physical interpretation of the observed peculiarity is accepted, we find in every case enormous time-intervals, during which the moon must have existed and have been subject to the earth's attraction. We are compelled to reject the idea that mere chance made the moon rotate as she does, keeping perfect time with her motion round the earth. We cannot accept the belief that, whereas the Supreme Intelligence allowed almost all the motions in the solar system to be completed in times no way related to each other, so that, for example, no exact number of days or months measure the year or any number of years, and that no exact number of hours or days measure the common lunar month or any other kind of month, or any number of any of these months, the Creator nevertheless saw fit in the Beginning to set the moon's turning motion in exact accordance with her motion round the earth—a relation not only utterly useless (at least, no one has ever yet been able to conceive any possible use it could have), but positively disadvantageous in more ways than one. It remains only that we should regard the relation as the result of physical processes: and so regarding it, we find that, in whatever way it was brought about, many millions or many hundreds of millions of years must have elapsed before the moon's movements received their final adjustment.

Now let us revert to the theory which I advanced originally in my book on the moon (p. 343, first edition), and which, as we have seen, Professor Newcomb considers the most probable—viz. that the moon's rotation-rate was determined when the greater part of her mass was fluid. Remembering the exceeding remoteness which must be assigned to that era of her career, let us consider the conditions under which she has existed since. It will be observed that I do not insist on her prior existence as a vaporous mass, at least as an essential point in my present reasoning. It is not that I entertain any doubt that she was for a long time a vaporous mass; but because it would be difficult to indicate any way by which any traces of what happened to her during that part of her existence could be detected. When she had become fluid, even, she would retain no trace of any of the accidents to which she would be exposed: luminous masses might fall upon her, but they would be absorbed into her fluid globe, leaving no sign of the encounter. It would not be till she began to lose her fluidity, as the fiery heat of her globe passed away, that any visible effects

would result from the shocks and collisions to which she would be exposed. I pass on at once then to this era of the moon's existence.

It is certain, in the first place, that at that time millions of millions of tons of matter, now forming part of the masses of the various members of the solar system, were travelling about as meteors. It would be utterly unreasonable to imagine that the process of meteoric indraught at present taking place on the earth is not also taking place on every member of the solar system, or that this process of growth, which all the members of the solar system are undergoing now, has not taken place during past ages, and will not take place during ages yet to come. But this is far from being all. Since we know that every meteor that falls upon this earth, or on any other planet, or on the moon, is there and then brought to the end of its existence as an independent body, we perceive that the process of meteoric indraught is one of diminishing activity. The supply of meteors is becoming slowly but steadily exhausted. Doubtless plenty yet remain, and will remain for millions of years yet to come. They never can be all consumed, in fact, any more than the air in the receiver of an air-pump can ever be exhausted by the process of pumping. Each stroke of the pump removes a certain volume of the rarefied air left in the receiver; but as the air grows rarer and rarer the actual amount of air removed is diminished, and of course the air removed never can be the whole of the air left, since, by the very nature of the process of exhaustion, a small portion only of the contents of the receiver is removed at each stroke. So with the process of meteoric exhaustion. Every year the earth sweeps up or gathers in all the meteors encountered in its track, and each planet, in each of its circuits round the sun, does likewise; but as the meteors become rarer and rarer the number swept up in any given time becomes less and less. Nor can all ever be swept up, since each planet, in each of its circuits, clears of meteors only a very minute portion of the solar domain. The inference as to the past is obvious. Many millions of years ago the number of meteors gathered in by any planet or satellite must have been enormously greater than it is at present.

Now, the present rate of meteoric indraught is not altogether insignificant. It has been calculated that the earth gathers in, in the course of a year, as many as 400 million meteoric bodies, large and small, from the great masses which break their way through the air,—our shield against the meteoric artillery,—down to bodies so minute that a telescope would be required to make them visible in their rush through the air. This, be it remembered, is a result deduced from observation, and so deduced as certainly to

fall short of the truth, not exceed it. In one sense the supply of meteoric matter seems enormous, while in another sense it is exceedingly small. If we assign to the meteors an average weight of only a single grain, we yet find that the earth grows a thousand tons in weight in three years, so that since the time of Abraham the earth's weight must have increased much more than a million tons. Probably one grain is too low an estimate of the average weight of these bodies. Professor Harkness, of Washington, has recently deduced from the known facts respecting meteors a result which accords closely with one which I myself enunciated in 1871 (as is natural, seeing that I used the same general evidence, and dealt with it in much the same manner). At the present rate of meteoric downfall, 400 million years or thereabouts would be required to increase the earth's diameter by a single inch.

It may seem at a first view as though this result were altogether inconsistent with the theory that any considerable portion of the earth's mass has been derived from meteoric aggregation. But in reality, when due account is taken, first of the former expansion of the earth's globe when it was in the vaporous state, secondly of the enormous length of time during which the process of indraught has probably taken place, and thirdly of the fact that the present density of meteoric distribution must be exceedingly small compared with that existing hundreds of millions of years ago, it appears that ninety-nine hundredths of the earth's whole mass might readily have been gathered in by meteoric aggregation. I do not here dwell upon the evidence showing this, because it does not belong to my subject; but it seemed necessary to mention that, so far as any difficulty from arising in the way suggested—that is, from the poverty of meteoric material—that in reality the real difficulty is to understand how the earth remained so small when we consider how enormous must have been the quantity of meteoric matter in remote eras to account for so many millions of millions of meteors remaining still uncaptured.

Now, the moon, travelling along with the earth in the remote ages to which our present inquiry relates, must have gathered in her own share of meteoric matter. At this present time, for instance, about thirty millions of meteorites, large and small, fall each year upon the moon. She passes through the same meteoric systems as the earth, and she can no more escape meteoric downfall as she thus rushes through these systems than the earth can. We may compare her companionship with the earth to that of a child with a grown person in a shower of rain. As many drops do not fall on the child as on the adult because the child is smaller; but the child gets as thoroughly drenched as his grown companion,

assuming neither to be protected by an umbrella. So the moon receives as many meteors on each square mile of her surface (on the average of many millions of years) as the earth does. Since her surface is about one-thirteenth of the earth's (more exactly two-twenty-sevenths), she receives about one-thirteenth of the number of meteors which the earth encounters, or, taking the number above-mentioned for the earth, the moon's annual indraught of meteors is at present about 30 millions.

In passing, it is worthy of special notice that the downfall on each square mile of the moon is equal to the downfall on each square mile of the earth, on the average of long periods. It follows from this that the moon's present rate of growth from meteoric aggregation is equal to the earth's. Not that the moon grows equally either in volume or in mass, for her annual growth in both respects is but about one-thirteenth of the earth's annual growth; but as her surface is only a thirteenth of the earth's, a meteoric deposit of equal thickness is received each year by the moon and by the earth. And this has been true during millions of years past. Now if two bodies, unequal in size, were to grow equally in diameter year after year, they would become in the long run, to all intents and purposes, equal in size. Imagine a million miles added to the diameters of both the earth and moon; then the earth would have a diameter of 1,008,000 miles, and the moon a diameter of 1,002,200 miles, and these numbers are practically equal—the difference between them being very small compared with either. This is not a point of any importance as regards the future history of the earth and moon, for it is quite certain that neither will ever add half a mile to their present diameters, even though they should continue to travel as they now do for a million millions of years. But it is a point of extreme importance as respects the past of our earth and moon—a circumstance which, so far as I know, no one has hitherto noticed.

Suppose, for instance, we imagine the earth at some exceedingly remote epoch to have had only a thousandth of her present mass, so that at the same density her diameter would be only one-tenth that which she now has, and her surface one-hundredth of her present surface. Then if the moon existed at the same time, in the same state—vaporous, fluid, or solid—she would add as many miles to her diameter year by year from meteoric indraught as the earth would. And if this had continued to the present time, it would actually follow that the moon should have added to her diameter then (whatever it may have been) nine-tenths of the present diameter of the earth, or, roughly, about 7,000 miles. But the moon only has a diameter of about 2,160 miles altogether.

It follows, therefore, that either the moon only had existence as a separate orb from the earth long after the earth had received the greater part of her present mass, or else the various stages of the moon's existence as a vaporous and as a fluid globe were very much shorter than the corresponding stages of the earth's existence. The latter is altogether the more probable explanation, and accords with what we should expect to happen during the cooling of the unequal masses of the earth and moon. But it is well to notice that our theoretical anticipations in this respect are thus confirmed by reasoning of another kind.

It has been calculated by Bischoff that the earth required 350 millions of years to cool from 2,000 degrees to 200 degrees centigrade, or in other words the earth must have existed as a ball of fused rocks for about that time. It may readily be shown that the moon would have remained fluid during only about a fourth of the time, say about 80 millions of years. Now, during the greatest part of this long period the surface of the moon would be viscid rather than fluid; and during the last ten or twelve millions of years of that period the moon's surface would be simply plastic. It would receive and retain any impressions which it might receive from without, much as the surface of a nearly dried pool of mud receives and retains the impressions of raindrops. Or rather, as such a surface, if stones be thrown upon it, allows the stones to pass through, and shows thereafter a shallow depression where the stone had fallen, so if any large mass fell upon the moon's surface while in the plastic state, the mass would pass below the surface, and a circular saucer-shaped depression only would show where the mass had fallen.

Let us suppose that the moon's surface was in this plastic state for only about three million years, remembering that, according to all that can be inferred from the experiments made by physicists and from the theoretical researches of mathematicians, this probably falls very far short of the truth.

And next let us suppose that at the remote era to which we must refer that special stage of the moon's development, the density of meteoric distribution in the solar domain was only ten times as great as it is at present, remembering that this also is probably very far short of the truth.

Now, among the meteors which fall each year upon the earth, few are large enough to break their way through the earth's atmospheric shield, without being either vaporised in their rush through it, or else caused to burst into a number of small fragments. Possibly over the whole earth some ten or twelve may thus fall in a year, one or two only being seen, because the chances are largely

in favour of a meteorite escaping detection as it falls. If we suppose that at present only four such meteorites fall on the average each year upon the earth, and that therefore one only falls at present in the course of about three years upon the moon, we are certainly not taking an exaggerated estimate of the present rate of downfall of large meteoric masses upon our satellite. Of course a much larger number of meteoric bodies of all sizes reach the moon, for she travels on her course without the protection of an atmosphere, at least she has no atmosphere dense enough to ward off even the smallest meteors. So that, in reality, some 30 million bodies large and small must actually impinge on the moon's surface each year; and probably some ten or twenty thousand are of the kind we call fire-balls. It is, however, to be noted that almost every mass which thus strikes the moon must be vaporised by the intense heat excited as it impinges on the moon's surface; and even if this did not happen,¹ only one or two of the very largest which might so fall in the course of a century or so would be visible on the moon's surface observed under the most favourable conditions, with the largest telescopes made by man. Moreover, we may restrict our attention to the largest meteorites, in considering the moon's plastic era, for most probably at that time she had an atmosphere not far inferior to the earth's present atmosphere, as a shield against meteors.

Putting one very large meteorite in three years as the present rate of downfall on the moon, it would follow that, at the remote period to which our researches relate, ten such meteorites would fall in three years. Thus, in the three millions of years during which the era may be safely assumed to have lasted, ten million very large meteorites fell, according to the moderate assumptions we have made, upon the plastic surface of our satellite. These would not correspond to the very largest meteorites or aerolites known to men, either as having fallen on the earth or as seen and measured while moving athwart the sky. From time to time bodies are seen whose diameter is estimated at several hundred yards; and though no masses of this size have been known to reach the earth within the historic period, it must be remembered that the chances are usually in favour of the explosion of such meteorites into fragments as they pass through our air. I imagine, however, that the estimate of most of these bodies has been considerably exaggerated.²

¹ A certain proportion of meteoric masses reach the earth, and so, also, a certain proportion must reach the moon, with relatively small velocities. For instance, those which travel the same way, and either overtake or are overtaken with only the difference of their velocity and the velocity of the earth (or moon, as the case may be).

² Though not quite to the extent imagined by Mr. Phipson in his treatise on

The point to be noticed here, however, is this, that a mass far too small to be discernible at the moon's distance, would produce a discernible mark if it fell on the moon's surface in the plastic era. A circular depression far larger in diameter than the falling mass would be formed at the place where it had pierced the viscous crust. So that we might fairly take into account the downfall of all the very large meteorites—that is, according to our estimate above, of some ten million masses—as competent to leave marks such as could be recognised with powerful telescopes from our earth, supposing nothing happened in later stages of the moon's history to obliterate such marks.

Among these ten million meteorites ten only in a thousand perhaps might be very large, so as to leave where they fell circular depressions from a quarter of a mile to a mile in diameter. For the diameter of the aerolites themselves, of course, would not be nearly so large as that of the circular depression left where they had fallen. In this case about a hundred million small shallow craters would be formed on the moon's surface during the plastic era.

But again, among these very large aerolites, probably some—it might be only one in a thousand—would be excessively large, from a quarter to half a mile perhaps in diameter. It is true, we know of no such mass having struck our earth within historic times, nor have any such masses been recognised in the earth's crust; but so many instances are on record of the passage of masses apparently as large as 100 yards in diameter through our air, which but for the air would certainly have fallen with their full mass on the earth's solid surface, that we cannot but believe in the existence even to this day of many enormous meteorites, and in the probability that at long intervals they fall upon our earth's atmospheric shield. Thus during these three million years some hundred very large masses would fall upon the moon's plastic surface, leaving where they had pierced the moon's crust vast circular depressions, each far exceeding in diameter the mass whose downfall had produced it.

Before proceeding to consider the result of such meteoric downfall on the moon's surface, I must remind the reader yet once more that, strange though these considerations which I am presenting to him may seem, they are based entirely upon known facts, and

Meteors, Aerolites, and Falling Stars. He has fallen into two mistakes, rather seriously affecting his conclusions: first, in taking the average height of great meteors above the earth as their average distance from the observer; and next, in supposing that a globe 206,000 times as far away as its diameter, subtends an angle of one minute, instead of an angle of one second only (a sixtieth part of a minute, that is).

probably fall even far short of the truth. The nebular hypothesis, or some modification of that hypothesis, of the formation of the solar system is received by all astronomers of repute in the present day. The enormous duration of the various periods of planetary and lunar development has been demonstrated not only by experiments on the cooling of various substances, but by the study of our earth's crust. We know that meteors of all kinds still encounter the earth, and have no choice but to believe that, since so many now remain, the number existing millions of years ago must have been enormously greater. We know certainly that the moon in her journey round the sun must have encountered her share of these meteoric bodies. And we cannot possibly doubt that any considerable meteoric mass falling on the moon's surface at any time during the long period when that surface was wholly or partially plastic, would leave a larger circular depression where it has pierced the crust.

All these points may be regarded as certain ; at least, any doubts respecting them must be doubts affecting the general theory of the evolution of the solar system, and such doubts need not here be combated.

But now the question arises whether the marks thus left upon the moon's surface would remain during the later stages of her existence down to the present time. It is certain that the surface of our own earth must once have been in a similar way pitted with the marks of meteoric downfalls, for she, like the moon, was in her growth

Pelted with star-dust, stoned with meteor-balls,

and the era when her surface was plastic to receive and to retain the marks of the meteoric hail-storm (before

Man and his works and all that stirred itself
Of its own motion

could live upon it) lasted many millions of those cosmical instants which men call years. Yet we know that of those impressions which the earth then received no traces now remain. Again and again has the surface of our earth been changed since then. By the denudation of continents, by the deposit of strata under seas, and by the repeated interchange of seas and continents, every trace of the primeval surface of our globe has long since been either removed or concealed.

Would this have happened with the moon? or if we are to judge by the evidence of what is, rather than by the consideration of what would have befallen, has this happened with the moon?

As regards the probable sequel of the state of things which, as

we have seen, must have existed when first the moon's surface solidified, it is not easy to form an opinion. On the one hand, there are reasons for supposing that for many long ages the moon would resemble our earth in having an atmosphere and oceans, though probably the atmosphere would be far rarer than ours is now, and the oceans far more limited in extent. On the other hand, it is impossible to overlook the actual facts of the case, viz. that at present the moon has no atmosphere of appreciable density, and no ocean surface at all, while the theories which have been advanced to explain the removal of an atmosphere and oceans formerly existing are, to say the least, not altogether satisfactory. They might account perhaps for the disappearance of a very tenuous atmosphere, and the drying up (or rather the soaking in) of oceans of limited extent; but scarcely for the disappearance of all signs of an atmosphere and oceans at all resembling those of our own earth.

On the whole, I am disposed to think that those features of our moon which have been regarded as indicating the former existence of oceans—as, for instance, the darkness of the low-level regions called seas, the existence of regions looking like alluvial deposits, and so forth—may be regarded as indicating only the existence of regions which remained liquid long after the rest of the moon's surface had solidified. I would not deny the possibility, or even the probability, that in these regions there may formerly have been considerable seas. Nay, they may possibly have been entirely sea-covered. But it certainly has not yet been proved that they ever were so.

Of course when the moon's surface was partially solid or even merely plastic and partially liquid, all the liquid matter would seek the lower levels. The plastic surface only would retain the marks of meteoric downfalls: that is, the traces of the fall of those many thousands of large masses which we have seen must have struck the moon during her plastic era. Where the liquid surfaces existed, no such traces could be retained, any more than the marks of rainfall can be retained by the surface of the sea.

On the one hand, then, if we suppose the atmosphere of the moon in remote times exceedingly tenuous and the seas very limited in extent, the effects of aerial denudation would be utterly insignificant compared with those which we recognise on the earth; so that we might expect the signs of meteoric pitting to be very little disturbed during the comparatively short era of the moon's existence as a habitable world. On the other hand, we could not expect any traces of meteoric downfall to remain in the low-lying regions to which the liquid portions of the moon's

surface formerly flowed. Only when this liquid matter had either solidified or been gradually withdrawn into the moon's interior, could irregularities be formed, retained, or recognised in these regions.

If these *à priori* considerations are just, it would be found—first, that the high-level regions of the moon would be marked by multitudinous small craters of all dimensions, from the minutest which the most powerful telescope could recognise to craters a mile or two in diameter; secondly, that the low-level regions would present a different colour, and, as it were, texture, being formed of different matter which, retaining its liquidity longer, had necessarily come to form the lower lunar levels; thirdly, that comparatively few craters, and those mostly small ones, would be found over these low-lying regions. To these probable features may be added, but with less antecedent likelihood, this—that in the arrangement of the smaller lunar craters, peculiarities might sometimes be recognised indicating the occasional fall of a flight or string of meteors such as we sometimes see travelling athwart our skies even in these times when the supply of meteoric matter is all but exhausted by comparison with the wealth of meteors formerly existing.

Now let us see how these anticipations accord with the facts. To avoid all possibility of prejudice I will take the account of lunar details from a work written by an official astronomer, one therefore not likely to consider even, far less to be prejudiced in favour of, speculations respecting the past history of the heavenly bodies (any more than a land surveyor or a civil engineer would be likely to dwell upon geological speculations respecting the soils or surfaces with which he has officially to deal). I must admit that Professor Newcomb, to whom I refer, differs entirely from most European official astronomers in this respect, as do others of his countrymen. In writing his treatise on astronomy he does not seem by any means to have thought it essential to eschew all consideration of the physical significance of observed facts. I would therefore have taken a description of the moon by some one else, some official astronomer of the purely surveying order; but unfortunately the descriptions of the moon in their writings are too incomplete to be of interest or value; and any thoughts as to the moon's probable conditions, either now¹ or in the remote past or

¹ Not long ago, a picture which some ingenious artist had painted to represent a lunar landscape, was sent to the Astronomical Society, for exhibition at one of the evening meetings. Many remarks were made on the probable accuracy or inaccuracy of various features of this fanciful but attractive painting. (In some respects it was decidedly inaccurate.) At last the chief official astronomer rose, and many expected that remarks of considerable interest would be addressed to the meeting respecting the lunar landscape. His actual speech was simply as follows: "Mr. Chairman, I move that this picture be demitted to the floor."

future, would be sought in vain. Let us hear, however, how Professor Newcomb describes the features of the moon which specially concern us here.

‘As the moon is now seen and mapped,’ he says, ‘the difference between the light and dark portions is due merely to a difference in the colour of the material, much of which seems to be darker than the average of terrestrial objects. . . . Galileo saw that the brighter portions of the disc were [are] broken up with inequalities of the nature of mountains and craters, while the darker parts were [are] for the most part smooth and uniform. . . . It is very curious that the figures of these inequalities in the lunar surface can be closely imitated by throwing pebbles upon the surface of some smooth plastic mass, as mud or mortar. . . . There is no more real smoothness in the regions of the supposed seas than elsewhere. The inequalities are smaller and harder to see on account of the darkness of colour, but that is all.’

As to peculiarities of arrangement, Webb remarks on the tendency to parallel direction among craters, and local repetitions: ‘Two similar craters often lie north and south of each other, and near them is frequently a corresponding duplicate. Two large craters occasionally lie north and south, of greatly resembling character, the southern usually three-fourths of the northern in size, from eighteen to thirty-six miles apart, and connected by ridges pointing in a south-west direction. Several of these arrangements are the more remarkable, as we know of nothing similar on the earth.’

If the views above considered are just—and it seems to me very difficult to controvert them—the multitudinous small craters would be due to external action, and they would be earlier formations in the main than the larger craters due to the reaction of the moon’s interior upon the contracting crust. Thus we might expect to find regions covered with small craters affected by the results of contractive processes and internal resistance to such contraction, in such sort that all the small craters would be distorted and all similarly. Beer and Mädler describe a lunar feature corresponding with what we should thus expect, speaking of ‘small craters entangled in general pressures, and squeezed into an oval form,’ the effect being ‘like that of an oblique strain upon the pattern of a loosely-woven fabric.’

It will be understood that I do not consider the larger features of the moon as necessarily or probably due to external action. I cannot see how the crust of the moon while plastic can have escaped being marked by multitudes of small craters; and I do not think it likely that the pitting thus caused would be obliterated by sub-

sequent processes of denudation. Thus I regard the crowded small craters which exist on the higher regions of the moon's surface as most probably due to meteoric downfall. But the crust thus pitted externally would, during later stages (or possibly contemporary stages) of the moon's progress, undergo changes resembling those which have affected our earth's crust.

First, the crust contracting more rapidly than the nucleus, because parting more rapidly with its heat, would be exposed to tremendous strains, corresponding precisely with those which would result from the expansion of a nucleus within an unchanging shell. It would probably be to this stage of the moon's development that we must refer the systems of radiating streaks which form so marked a feature of the lunar globe.

Secondly, the crust having cooled with comparative rapidity (though millions of years were probably required for this process), the nucleus would in its turn begin to cool more quickly than the crust, having more heat to part with. Accordingly spaces would form between the nucleus and the crust, were it not that the action of gravity would compel the crust to follow up the contracting nucleus. From this process two things would follow: first, massive corrugations would form on the surface of the moon; in other words, mountain ranges and all orders of ridge-shaped irregularities; secondly, the heat resulting from this mechanical process would, as in the case of our own earth even to this day, cause volcanic explosions, and result in the formation of mighty craters.

But with these stages of the moon's development I am not at present concerned. It is with the multitudinous small craters which cover all the higher regions of the moon that I have sought to deal. It appears to me that whether we consider what must have happened as the moon passed through the plastic and semi-plastic stages of her existence, or whether we consider the evidence derived from the actual condition of the moon's surface, we are alike led to the conclusion that the innumerable small craters which cover the higher lunar levels have been caused chiefly by meteoric downfall. When I first advanced this theory (in 1873) I had not yet fully recognised the evidence both *à priori* and *à posteriori* in its favour. I said then that 'I should certainly not care to maintain it as the true theory of the origin of the small craters,' though I pointed out that 'as yet no plausible theory has been urged respecting this remarkable feature of the moon's surface.' I now view the subject differently. The evidence in favour of the meteoric theory of the small craters is much stronger than I at first supposed, the difficulty of forming any other plausible

theory much greater. I may even go so far as to say that it would be a problem of extreme difficulty to show how a body formed like the moon, exposed to similar conditions, and for the same enormous time-intervals, could fail to show such markings as actually exist on the moon. A theory of which this can be said stands on a somewhat strong basis. But, after all, I believe no amount of abstract reasoning will do so much to indicate the probability of this explanation as a brief study of the moon's surface with a good (not necessarily a very powerful) telescope. If this essay should lead some thus to examine the moon who have never yet done so, not only will it have subserved a useful purpose, but the pleasure they will derive from the novel experience will be deemed, I am satisfied, a sufficient reward for whatever time and attention they may have given to the reading of this paper on the smaller craters of our satellite.

A Change of Views.

BY JAMES PAYN.

As a sporting event and a wicked gambling proceeding the Derby is naturally out of my line. A serious writer, I am well aware, should be careful how he contaminates his pen with such a subject—and especially if he doesn't understand it—but he may go some lengths, if actuated by a moral purpose. This may be seen any day in the way in which the most respectable journals handle the most disreputable topics. 'They only touch upon the matter in the interests of morality,' or 'for the purpose of holding it up for public reprehension'—just as though a barn-door should apologise for the polecat nailed upon it. I, however, have an excuse for alluding to so sad a thing as a race-course which is more than valid; the two Derbys I have in my mind are indissolubly connected with a reverent, if not a sacred, subject, in the person of the Rev. Theodore Pyx. On the first occasion when I stood beside him on Epsom Downs he was not indeed a clergyman, but he was very near it. He was not the rose, but, so to speak, stood in the next pot to it; for he had passed his 'voluntary,' and was to be 'japped' in a fortnight. That was the expression which, I am grieved to say, he used, in those unregenerate days, for the ceremony of ordination.

We went together from London on a drag, with a good many University men, and Pyx was not the gravest of the party. He had never been remarkable for gravity, and this was almost the last occasion when he would be at liberty to indulge his natural instincts for liveliness and larks. He called it, with a touching pathos, his 'last fling'—and it was a tolerably high one. There was nothing that he did not do that Derby day that was to be done—from throwing at his Aunt Sally up to losing 'the tenner' which another aunt had sent him (on hearing he had 'passed his Vol') in backing the first favourite. I can see him now, with his hat stuck round with dolls, having his fortune told by a gipsy, who, with all her talents for prevision, and desire to prophesy smooth things, never dreamt of promising him that he should be one day Archbishop of Canterbury: he looked so exceedingly unlike even the very earliest formation—the merest chrysalis—of any development of that nature. He did not come back on the

drag, but inside of it, along with the empty hampers, by reason of our solicitude for his personal safety. Though his equilibrium was out of gear, the native geniality of his disposition remained unimpaired; and we could hear him singing all the way underneath us, no doubt at the top of his voice, but mellowed by distance and his position so as to resemble the lay of a bumble-bee between two panes of glass. The last I saw of Theodore Pyx that day was his legs; he was taken out head foremost at his lodgings in Bury Street, St. James's, and put to bed by two charitable undergraduates, whom he entreated to make an apology for him to Dr. Paley, with whom, he said, he had made an engagement to sup that evening at Cremorne. In this impression he was of course mistaken; but I mention it in fairness to Pyx, since it shows that his recent course of theological study had not been obliterated, though he just then confused it with matters of a somewhat different character.

I had had some slight acquaintance with this gentleman during his college career, where he had distinguished himself as a good billiard-player and a mellifluous and flowery speaker at the Union; but we had not much in common together. He belonged to a fast set, and rather looked down upon me, as being only fast by fits and starts—as in that expedition to the Derby (which was my first one, by-the-bye); he had a knowledge, too, of practical mathematics, which enabled him to make a book upon every great racing event of the year—although it did not suffice to make him win. A tall, handsome young fellow he was, and, though not of an aristocratic type in other respects, had fine white hands which at that time we thought little of. They were noticed chiefly in dealing at Loo or Vingt-et-un, where it is one's own hands only in which one takes any particular interest; but they afterwards served him in some stead. He did not make much money by those games, I believe, and had none of his own to start with; but those who knew him best were wont to aver that Theodore Pyx was a shrewd fellow—an opinion which, though I did not share it, I am bound to say has since been amply justified.

About four years after I left the University I happened to be spending a few weeks' holiday at a certain seaside town on the south coast, with an aunt of mine who was given to ritualism. She attended matins and vespers every day at the district church, and was rather scandalised at my not accompanying her on those expeditions.

'I hope at all events, my dear,' she said, 'that on Sunday you will not go to any church save St. Ethelburga's.'

This I readily promised, since it left me more alternatives than

she was aware of, when she presently added, which decided me at once on accompanying her, 'that I should then have the privilege of listening to that most eloquent of theologians, Mr. Theodore Pyx.'

'Why, good gracious, I know *him*!' cried I.

'I am truly glad to hear it,' returned she gravely; 'for it shows that your acquaintances have been well chosen.' There was a reproof in her voice, which I at once understood to have been evoked by my having alluded to her favourite Divine in a too jocular and even somewhat disparaging tone, and I hastened to remove this unfortunate impression.

I said that he had been a most admirable speaker at the Union, and she replied, to my surprise, 'that he was so now whenever opportunity offered.' I subsequently discovered that she meant that respectable assembly of High Churchmen called the Church Union, and she was much pleased to find, or rather to infer, that even in my undergraduate career I had been a constant attendant at it.

I confess I looked forward to the ensuing Sunday with even more than the wonted enthusiasm that the prospect of hearing a fashionable preacher always awakens within me, for in the mean time I had gathered many interesting particulars of my old college friend. From the rich widow, Lady Gergoyle, who had erected and endowed the church, down to my aunt's ancient handmaiden, Betty, his congregation it seemed adored the Rev. Theodore Pyx. He might have had a pair of slippers worked by fair hands for every day of the year if he could have brought himself to wear them; but his habits were ascetic. He wore tight boots, not to show off his feet (though they certainly, as I afterwards observed, looked smaller in them), but for the sake of the discomfort. Under his buttonless silk waistcoat it was understood that he had a horse-hair shirt, and there were whispers abroad that in the cupboard of his private oratory hung a scourge that had drunk deep of poor Theodore Pyx's blood. What was so charming about him, however, said my aunt, was that you would never guess these things to look at him; to the outward eye, he appeared comfortable enough: there was nothing to speak of fastings and watchings in his appearance, nor did he ever allude to them himself, except in such confidential communications with certain members of his congregation as were almost—though not quite—under the seal of the Confessional.

When, indeed, I had the opportunity—or 'privilege,' as it was the custom, I found, to term it—of seeing the Rev. Theodore Pyx in his pulpit, he appeared to me to be in particularly good case,

and to have suffered nothing from those mortifications of the flesh to which it was his habit to submit himself.

He had, indeed, certainly *made* flesh, whether it was mortified or not ; his hands were considerably plumper, and one of them wore a ring—perhaps a pastoral ring—with a fine diamond in it, which I am quite sure he had never possessed as a layman. He was said to be a very ‘earnest worker,’ and it is certain that he worked with his hands, and that in a very attractive and graceful manner ; when he raised them in supplication, my aunt said that they reminded her of a dove with folded wings, which in the act of benediction became a pair of ditto. His voice was really a good one ; only when it dropped to a sweet murmur, or solemn coo, I could not for the life of me help recollecting how it had sounded among the hampers under the drag upon that Derby day. It was very illogical, as well as uncharitable in me, to revert to such a matter, for the wildest undergraduate may become the best of men and clergymen in time, and Theodore Pyx had not been so very wild. Only, somehow, as I watched him, those lines about the ‘snowy-banded, delicate-handed, dilettante priest,’ would come into my mind, and I could not quite believe in that hair shirt, nor yet in the scourge in his cupboard.

I called upon him the next day, and sent in my card, but he was compelled to decline to see me ; it was the eve of St. Bungay the Elder, who, it seemed, was his patron saint, on the anniversary of whose martyrdom he was bound to be ‘in retreat’ for twenty-four hours. He accepted, however, the invitation I carried to him from my aunt, to dine with us on Wednesday and renew his acquaintance with his old college friend ; and at the hour appointed he arrived.

His hostess received him as though he had been a Prince of the Blood Royal who had taken Holy Orders from conscientious convictions, and set before him, I must needs confess, a much better dinner than she had hitherto thought it worth while to provide for her nephew. Perhaps I was piqued at this, but his mode of receiving my welcome when we first met had not pleased me ; it had not been frank, and had suggested apprehension ; as though it was just possible I might have told some stories of his career before the blessed St. Bungay the Elder had taken him under his immediate protection.

His conversation at dinner was confined to the two graces (by which I mean, of course, his benedictions) and the new painted window at St. Ethelburga’s which Lady Gergoyle was putting up in memory of her late husband ; which, combined with the way in which he put aside, with a gentle sigh, any allusion to our college

days, I confess, exasperated me. I felt like Hotspur, when the courtier met him.

He made me mad, to see him shine so briak and smell so sweet,
And talk so like a waiting gentlewoman.

When my aunt left the room, I said, rather curtly, 'Now, Pyx, have a cigar. This is one of the old brands you used to like so.'

'Thank you, no,' he answered gently. 'I have quite given up smoking.'

'You don't object to other people doing it, I hope?' It was clear by the look he cast at his long silk waistcoat that he did; but I had already lit my regalia, which I was glad to think distributed a fine full flavour of tobacco smoke such as no incense would readily take away from that garment. 'And billiards?' I continued: 'I suppose you never touch a cue now.'

He shook his head with a sad smile. 'I should hardly know which end to strike with.'

'And yet, what a dab you used to be at pool, Pyx! Do you remember how you used to laugh at Jones "for putting his trust in Providence" as he called it, when he used to go in for a fluke?'

'I am thankful to say that I have forgotten those matters,' said he, taking a sip of port. 'What a noble character is your dear aunt!'

'Yes; she's a jolly good old woman,' said I cheerfully. 'I hope you are not thinking of marrying her.'

'I? My good friend!' he answered, smiling. 'I have a wife already.'

'The deuce you have!' exclaimed I, with astonishment. 'That's not generally known, is it?'

'You mistake me,' said he. 'I mean that I am already wedded to the Church.'

'Oh, I see; you go in for celibacy of the clergy?'

'Most certainly I do. A priest should be vowed to Heaven. Perhaps you have not read my little work upon that subject?'

'No; but I should like to read it immensely. I hope it has a portrait of the author for its frontispiece.'

'Well, yes, it has,' said he, with an imperturbable gravity; 'it was by desire of my congregation that it was inserted.'

If he had not been sitting at my own table, I think I must have burst out laughing: as it was, I only said, 'Well, that was rather hard upon the ladies, Pyx. It appears to me that they adore you—as indeed they always did.'

A roseate flush spread over my companion's features. 'Let us recall, my friend, no humiliating antecedents.'

He was thinking, I knew, of the milliner in the High Street whom he certainly would have married at college, only, as he had frankly owned, he had not the money to pay for a special license, and to have put up the banns would have been ruin.

I felt that, though Pyx was a humbug, it would still be inhospitable to roast him further, so I hastened to assure him that nothing I had known to his disadvantage in his salad days would ever pass my lips, and then turned the conversation to his parish.

And so we parted good friends.

Six months after my return to town I had a letter from my aunt, which contained the following postscript: 'We have all been greatly distressed here by the conduct of your friend, Mr. Theodore Pyx; it will be a sad blow, I fear, to the cause with which he has been so unhappily identified. You doubtless saw yesterday's *Post*.'

I had seen nothing about Pyx in the paper in question, and rushed down to the club at once to look at it. There was nothing about him in the Police Reports, nor yet in the proceedings of the Divorce Court, which my eye naturally sought in the first instance. What *could* he have done? At last I found it under a special heading, '*Marriage in High Life*.' The Reverend Theodore Pyx had been united in the bonds of wedlock (with full choral service) to Emily, relict of the late Sir Anthony Gergoyle, K.C.B., formerly Governor of Patagonia.

It was not without some difficulty, for I was interrupted by several paroxysms of laughter, that I could write the required letter of sympathy and condolence to my aunt, upon the backsliding of her favourite Divine. I said I blushed for him as though I were the painted window put up by Lady Gergoyle to the memory of her late husband; a metaphor which pleased my respected relative very much, by the way, and gave her a higher opinion of my intelligence than she had been hitherto pleased to entertain.

I neither saw nor heard anything of Pyx again till last Derby day, which found me, for the second time in my life, upon Epsom Downs. It is no matter why I thus revisited an entertainment so unsuited to my own respectable habits. I disdain to protest that I patronised it because the institution tends to improve the breed of horses; suffice it to say that I was there, and that there I met Theodore Pyx—once more upon a drag—his own drag—and in very pleasant company. He had a red silk tie, which contrasted with a well-cut white waistcoat, that set off his appearance to great advantage, but certainly detracted from it in an ecclesiastical point of view.

In answer, however, to my astonished stare, he at once informed me that he had 'cut the Church,' to the health of which, nevertheless and to show that there was no ill-feeling, he would be very happy to drink a glass of champagne with me.

'But where,' said I, 'is Mrs. Pyx?'

'Hush! she retains her maiden—I mean, her courtesy title: Lady Gergoyle is inside.' And he introduced me to her through the open window accordingly.

She was a fine woman, but older than her present husband: I should say five-and-twenty years older. She had some cold chicken and salad on her lap, and a tankard of claret-cup in her hand, and seemed to be enjoying herself exceedingly.

'You must come down to our house in the country,' she said, 'and stay a week with your old college friend.'

'There's a capital billiard table,' added Pyx, 'and you will find me in pretty good practice again.'

And he winked unutterable things. I felt myself in quite a false position, for it was evident, not only that Pyx had been playing his late ecclesiastical game for something like the very thing he had gained by it, but also that he thought it one which all sensible persons, including myself, must sympathise with and admire.

'You offered me a weed the last time I saw you, my good fellow,' he said; 'now take one of mine:' and he gave me one of the very longest cigars I ever saw, except the one he had in his own mouth, which was its twin brother.

When he gave up Celibacy, it seems, he resumed Tobacco. What he had done with his hair shirt and his scourge—if they ever existed—I know not: perhaps he had left them as relics to the shrine of St. Ethelburga.

It is very improbable that I shall revisit Epsom again; but the association of it with the Rev. Theodore Pyx will abide with me for ever: it seems, so to speak, to hallow those two Derbys.

The Homes and Haunts of the Italian Poets.

VII.—BERNI.

BY T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE.

FRANCESCO BERNI was born towards the end of the fifteenth century. The utmost endeavours of his biographers have failed to fix the date more precisely. He went to Rome when he was nineteen, and there immediately became attached to the service of the Cardinal di Bibbiena. This happened towards the latter years of the Cardinal's life; and he died in 1520. Some few years before 1520, therefore, Berni was nineteen; but there is nothing to show how many years these few may have been. There are reasons for believing that they could not have been many; and we shall probably not be far wrong if we suppose the poet to have been born about 1498, and to have gone up to Rome about 1517.

Ariosto, who in respect to choice of theme and the outward form of his verse, though not in mode of treatment, may be considered to belong to the same school as Berni, and a whole host of other poets and poetasters of that century, was by very far the greatest and noblest of the group. And though we have to come down only from 1474, the date of the poet of Ferrara, to 1498—some twenty-four years—to meet with the birth of Berni, we have to make a very much greater descent not only from the one poet to the other, but from the one man to the other. Nevertheless, the immense popularity which Berni enjoyed among his contemporaries and the generation which succeeded them, and the fact that he has always been recognised by his countrymen, and by literary historians and critics, as the head and chief of a school of poetry which for many generations held its ground and contributed to the formation of the national taste and character so markedly that that style of composition has always been, and is still, known as *Bernesque*, are reasons sufficient to necessitate the admission of his name to our roll of Italian poets.

The leading idea which prompted Berni, and his followers and imitators, was much the same as that which inspired a much greater man, nearly a hundred years later, in a neighbouring country, Michael Cervantes, who was born in 1547. Of course the scope and purposes of the Spanish satirist were very much larger and more important in the history of the national literature

and character than those of the Italian. But as the Spaniard was led by the monstrosities of the old romances of chivalry to extinguish them by the satire of his immortal work, so the Italian was moved by the absurdities and impossible adventures of the singers of the exploits of the Paladins of Charlemagne and the Knights of Arthur's Round Table to turn their narratives into ridicule by the burlesque treatment of a similar subject.

For this purpose he chose the 'Orlando Innamorato,' a poem which had been left unfinished and imperfect by Matteo Boiardo, and re-wrote it after his own manner. He wrote besides twenty-seven 'Capitoli,' or short pieces of verse, mostly of a burlesque character, and many of them on ridiculous subjects, the titles of some of which remind us of the 'Praise of the Gout,' of 'Folly,' and the like, which came into fashion among the learned triflers of a somewhat later day among ourselves. Berni has left us 'Capitoli' in 'Praise of Eels,' 'Of Peaches,' 'Of Tom Culls,'¹ 'Of Thistles,' and others not equally mentionable to ears polite. We have also some thirty sonnets, and a few other short miscellaneous pieces. He takes his place on the Italian Parnassus wholly by virtue of the 'Orlando Innamorato.'

A variety of notices of himself and his fortunes are to be found scattered in various places of his works, more especially in the 'Orlando.' And from these the following particulars are in great part taken.

He was born at a village called Lamporecchio, situated in that district of Tuscany called the Val di Nievole. The name is given to all that fertile plain which lies between the Monte Albano and the little town of Pescia. The traveller from Florence to Lucca has it on his left hand as he passes at the foot of the hills after leaving Pistoia behind him. The region is an exceptionally smiling and fertile one, and is known as the garden of Tuscany. The village of Lamporecchio, with its old castle, stands on the very edge of this plain, at the foot of the Monte Albano. How he came to be born there we are not told. His father was of Bibbiena. He was, says Berni, speaking of himself in the 'Orlando,'² 'a certain jolly companion of Florence. A Florentine he was, and of noble family, although his father was born and brought up in the Casentino, where *his* father having lived a long time acquired citizenship in a sort of a way, and took to himself a wife, and made a home in Bibbiena, which is a very pleasant place overlooking the Arno.'

¹ As far as I can find, the little fresh-water fish so called is what is meant by *ghiozzo*.

² Canto 67, stanza 36.

A very pleasant place is the little ancient town of Bibbiena; and though it is not clear whether Berni ever was there, his connection with the place, as set forth in the above-cited stanza of the 'Orlando,' was a circumstance of decisive importance in his life. For that pleasant place, overlooking the Arno as it does from its perch on a jutting knoll of the last slope of the Apennine, was the birthplace of the celebrated Bernardo Dovizi, better known as the Cardinal di Bibbiena.

Bernardo Dovizi had been born a poor lad in remote little Bibbiena, and was in some way or other, the exact particulars of which have perished, connected by relationship with the Berni family. Possibly this may have been the motive which induced the poet's father to fix himself there. The young Dovizi had often gazed wistfully from Bibbiena's piazza over the low terrace parapet wall, across the sweet Casentino woods and streams, away to the spur of the Apennine, which shut in him and his native valley from the lower Valdarno, from Florence, and from fortune. But an elder brother of the Dovizi had succeeded in crossing that wistfully-gazed-at hill, beyond which lay for the young Bernardo the realisation of all sorts of golden dreams; and had achieved the far greater success of hitching himself on in some capacity to the mighty house of Medici. Given such a chance, needful allowance of brains, and sufficiently elastic notions of right and wrong, what might not be asked and expected from Fortune! The elder Dovizi, Scotchman-like and Tuscan-like, was not forgetful of the poor family left at home in upland little hungry Bibbiena, but seizing fitting occasion by the forelock, with wistful reverence and cap in hand confides to the 'Magnificent' Lorenzo, that he has a brother at home in the Casentino, who was dying of ambition to become, he also, a devoted servant of the good and gracious Medici!—a likely lad, who, the brother was sure, would do credit to his recommendation. 'So! so! To be sure! Why not! Let him come! There's our son, His Eminence, the Cardinal,¹ who will be fourteen next birthday. Your brother is nineteen you say. Well! let him come and serve our boy-Cardinal.' So Bernardo came, and at once made himself acceptable to the pleasure-loving but also study-loving young Cardinal. The two lads studied together, went together to Rome, went together into exile when the bad days came with the invasion of French Charles VIII.; and together emerged into the sun of prosperity and Rome, when the second Julius sat in Peter's seat. The young satellite of the house of Medici found the means of making himself agreeable and useful to Julius; and, when Julius died, was of no small assistance in helping his patron to

¹ He who in 1513 became Leo X.

climb into the vacant chair. And no sooner had he done so than he forthwith pulled his ladder up after him, making Bernardo Dovizi a cardinal in his turn. And he, thus become a dispenser instead of a seeker of Fortune's favour, is, in his turn, not forgetful of old times, of Tuscan connections, and of the little hill-town overlooking the Arno and the pleasant Casentino; but draws up his relative young Berni after him to Rome, the great centre of ambitions and talents, the goal of each clever adventurer's hopes!

But this is anticipating. Bernardo Dovizi received the purple from Leo X. in 1513. But it must have been probably some four or five years later that Francesco Berni was called by him to Rome. How soon the boy found the means of accomplishing that first stage on the road to fortune, which took him from Lamporecchi to Florence, there is nothing to show. Nor have we any information as to his life during this his first sojourn in the Tuscan capital. 'He was then,' says he himself in the following lines of the same stanza of the '*Orlando*' in which he tells us of his birthplace, 'carried to Florence, where he lay a poor devil till he was nineteen years of age.'

It is certain, however, that during these years he must have received from the care of some person the elements of as good an education as the time and place could afford him. Not only must he have attained such a degree of scholarship as fitted him, more or less, for receiving Orders—the absolutely essential preliminary necessity for one who hoped to ope the world his oyster in those days otherwise than by the sword—a degree of proficiency which need not be estimated very highly—but he did unquestionably become a very well-read Latin scholar, and (though some of his verses, especially his pentameters, are such as a fourth-form boy in my day would have been scourged for), a not altogether contemptible Latin versifier, as some of his extant Latin poems show.

These two verses of the '*Orlando Innamorato*':—

Poi fu condotto in Fiorenza, ove giacque
Fin a diciannove anni poveretto!—

of which the substance has already been given, contain the whole of Berni's autobiographical notices of the first nineteen years of his life. And we have no other source of information from which to supplement them. We must therefore picture him to ourselves a lad of nineteen, probably already in deacon's orders, having the tonsure therefore and wearing the ecclesiastical cassock, going to Rome on the invitation of His Eminence the Cardinal di Bibbiena, and immediately on his arrival making a portion of the great man's

household. The lines next following the two quoted above continue his autobiographical notices in this wise :—

A Roma andò di poi, come a Dio piacque,
 Pien di molta speranza, e di concetto
 D'un certo suo parente Cardinale
 Che non gli fece mai nè bene nè male.¹

The above are not the only words to be found in his writings which impress one disagreeably with the notion that Francesco Berni was a thankless as well as in other respects a graceless ne'er-do-well! The Cardinal brought him to water, but could not make him drink! He gave him a home in his house, and placed him on the high road to fortune. But Berni was not a man whom it was possible to advance to high dignity. In any other place than Rome, in any other profession than the Church, and in any other age of the world, he would probably have fared much worse than he did—would have been turned out of any decent man's house—certainly out of that of a dignitary of the Church!

Berni, however, in the Rome of Leo X. was a very popular man. Some men's lives have been failures because they have fallen upon times or spheres not suited to them. But Rome under Leo X. was of all the world and all the ages the very spot and time for Berni. At any other time or place he would have been a witty amusing dog, but too loose and scurrilous a good-for-naught to have reached a higher or more reputable social standing than that of a tavern-haunter and boon companion. But at the court of Christ's Vicegerent, where sock and buskin alike were worn beneath the cassock, and the most profligate wit as naturally took to 'holy orders' as a fish takes to water, Francesco Berni was the right man in the right place! 'Already at twenty or one-or-two and twenty he was universally in request. No feast or revel was complete without him, and ecclesiastical honours and secure wealth awaited his mature age. Already his burlesque and satiric muse had made him the delight and the terror of Rome; and his friends might say of him that they could neither live with him nor without him, so charming was his ever-ready wit; so terrible his biting and pungent tongue; so pleasant the easy license of his high-kilted muse; so dangerous the malignat stab of his dagger-pen.'²

¹ 'Then he went to Rome, as it pleased God, full of many hopes, and of great expectations from a certain cardinal, a relation of his, who never did anything for him.' The literal translation is 'who never did him any good or evil.' But the way in which the phrase is used by the Tuscans makes it equivalent in meaning to the words I have used.

² A few sentences of this estimate of Berni and of his position at Rome have been taken from a privately printed sketch by the author, written some years ago.

Yet he was far from being contented with his lot; and it would seem that his sole cause of discontent was that some modicum of work was demanded of him by those at whose cost he lived. Few men have ever so frankly and naïvely protested that what they wanted in the world was to eat, drink, sleep, and do nothing at all. In that same sixty-seventh Canto of the 'Orlando,' already quoted, he says, speaking of his life in Rome:—

Quanto peggio facea, più aveva da fare ;
Aveva sempre in seno, e sotto il braccio,
Dietro e innanzi di lettere un fastello,
E scriveva e stillavasi il cervello.
Quivi anche, o fusse la disgrazia, o 'l poco
Merito suo, non ebbe troppo bene.¹

Where the cause of his miscarriage was is not far to seek; for a few lines further on in the same passage we read:—

Nessun di servitù giammai si dolse
Nè più ne fu némico di costui ;
E pure a consumarlo il Diavol tolse ;
Sempre il tenne fortuna in forza altrui.
Sempre che comandargli il padron volse
Di non servirlo venne voglia a lui !
Voleva far da se, non comandato ;
Com' un gli comandava, era spacciato !
Cacce, musiche, feste, suoni e balli,
Giuochi ; nessuna sorte di piacere
Tropo il movea: piacevangli i cavalli
Assai ; ma si pasceva del vedere,
Che modo non avea di comperalli ;
Onde il suo sommo bene era in jacere
Nudo, lungo, disteso ; e 'l suo diletto
Era non far mai nulla, e starsi in letto !²

And in another place, writing to the 'Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici,' a poetical begging letter after the manner of the times,

¹ 'The worse he did his work the more he had to do! He always had a mass of letters in his bosom, under his arm, before him and behind him; and wrote and wrote, and spun out his brains! Here, too, whether it were ill luck or his small deservings, he did not get on very well.'

² 'No man ever complained more bitterly of having to serve, or was more completely an enemy to it, than this man. And yet the devil made a point of wearing him out at it! Fortune always kept him in the power of others! As sure as the master wanted to give him any orders he was beset by the desire of not doing what was wanted! He wanted to do as he pleased of his own accord, not at the word of command. As soon as anyone gave him orders it was all up with him! Hunting, music, feasting, songs and dances, sports—no sort of pleasure was too much for him. He delighted in horses; but had to satisfy himself with looking at them, for he had not the means of buying them. So that his *summum bonum* was to lie naked, stretched out at his length; and his delight was to do nothing whatever, and lie a-bed!'

he tells him fairly that, whatever he may be disposed to do for him,

Non bisogna parlarli di fatica,
Ohe come dici il cotal della peste,
Quella è la vera mia mortal nemica.¹

And many other equally frank passages might be cited from his works, in which he celebrates the delights of eating and drinking and having nothing whatever to do. In one passage he pictures to himself the delight of combining all enjoyments by lying in bed while some kind hand puts the good things into his mouth! And this is the man who thinks that it must be ill luck or the devil himself which prevented him, who had not a farthing in the world, from doing well in the service of an employer! And while writing thus of himself, he absolutely has the face to complain of all his patrons that they did not do enough for him! Certainly no other social system in the world would have done by a very great deal so much for him as Leo X.'s Church did!

In 1520 Bernardo Dovizi, Cardinal di Bibbiena, died, poisoned, as was thought at the time, 'in a couple of eggs.' It was supposed, too, that the contriver of his death by this means was no other than Christ's Vicegerent on earth; and that the motive was to be found in certain incautious words which the Cardinal had let drop as to conversations he had had with Francis I. of France, suggestive of the possibility of his—the Cardinal of Bibbiena's—succession to the Chair of St. Peter after Leo's death. But the total inability of the medical science of the time to discover the causes of death in a vast number of cases, combined, with the indubitable fact of the common use of poison, to cause suspicion of foul play to rest on almost every death, of a notable person, the cause of which was not altogether evident. And, as Tiraboschi remarks, if Leo X. had poisoned him, he would not have permitted the body to be opened, which was done. The argument is not to my mind a very conclusive one. Nevertheless Tiraboschi may be right.

Berni, however, at the unexpected death of his patron once again fell on his legs with a fortune he certainly did not deserve. For he passed into the service of the Cardinal's nephew, Angelo Dovizi, who was Protonotary of the Church, though he must have been a young man much about Berni's age. Nevertheless he was not more contented with him than he had been with the Cardinal. Here is what he says, in continuation of the passage from the sixty-seventh Canto of the 'Orlando' above quoted:—

¹ 'You must not speak to me of work! As the man said of the plague, *that is my true and mortal enemy!*'

Morto lui, stette con un suo nipote,
 Dal qual trattato fu come dal zio;
 Onde le bolgie trovandosi vote,
 Di mutar cibo gli venne desio.¹

It must be supposed that the Protonotary still required him *do* something in return for his maintenance. That he was not upon other than pleasant, and by no means distant or formal, terms with his patron is abundantly evident from the following curious and characteristic passage from a letter—one of the thirteen which alone have been preserved—written by Berni to the Protonotary from Rome on November 3, 1522. It appears that there was pestilence at Rome, and that Messer Angelo Dovizi had thought fit to run away from it. The letter begins thus:—

“Oh, blind that ye are! what boots it to labour and toil so earnestly? Ye must all return to our great primeval mother! And your name will no more be heard!” This is a *terzet* from Petrarch; and is good for quoting to people who run hither and thither, to avoid the pestilence, as you do! I should have been better pleased than I ever was in my life, if what George told me had been true—that you have got the pestilence there² too! So that you should have been obliged to hurry back here, and I should have shut the door in your face, for fear of contagion from you! I begin to think you are like Æneas, who went wandering round the world, was driven first from Thrace, then from Crete, then from the Strophedes, and then was within an inch of having to turn back home again in desperation! Believe me, when you have searched thoroughly, you will not find a better or a safer place to live in than Rome. And you will be so convinced of it that you will wish you had never left it. Don’t fancy yourself safe where you are! I hope to God that fifteen days will not pass before you have the plague there; and then you will have to run for it a second time! And then where are we to go? To Santo Geminiano or to Banco? I know very well that the very last resource, and end of all the story, will be poor old Bibbiena. But while waiting to see what we shall see, I shall be told one of these days that Monsignore Angelo is at Bibbiena; as it was written to me the other day that you were at Florence, though there were no truth in it. Then what a good laugh I shall have, and how I shall congratulate³ myself! For if God gives one grace to escape till next

¹ ‘At his death (that of the Cardinal) he remained with a nephew of his, by whom he was treated as he had been by the uncle. So that, finding his pockets empty, he conceived a wish to change his quarters.’

² Angelo Dovizi, it would seem from another passage in the letter, was at Civit  Castellana.

³ Apparently he means ‘how I shall hug myself on my superior wisdom in advising

Christmas, there will not be a more contented man in Rome than I! But now, since you are at Cività, you might at least tell one in whose house you are lodging, and who is with you, and how I am to write to you from time to time. You ought to have thought of all these things, or at least of one of them, when you wrote to me yesterday morning in a furious hurry, as you always do. It would serve you right if I were to remain eight days without writing, since the small will you have to write is shown by your writing to others as you do to me. But the end of the matter is that it is fated that I must write to you every day, and return good for evil, as God does!'

He goes on to speak of the application of one of Messer Angelo's servants, who had left him, for a character under his (Berni's) hand; which he says, he gave him '*in formâ cameræ cum honoribus et¹ oneribus*! You would have died of laughter, if you had seen it! So little by little you are getting rid of your family! What would you have! This fellow is gone. Dionisio is not here. Antonio has had leave of absence. Gio. Paolo talks of leaving. We shall be left rather too much to ourselves. You did well to free yourself from the mule and the grooms at one blow. But you must be a wizard to divine that the pestilence was to last as long as it has done, and that therefore you would not need a beast to ride in Rome. Perhaps we may as well get rid of the housing.'

The letter is a long one, and goes on to speak of a variety of business matters in a way which clearly shows that Berni must have acted in the capacity of general house steward or superintendent—*intendente di casa*, as the Italians call it.

Nevertheless familiar, and almost somewhat more than familiar, as is the tone of this letter, it would seem that the young Protonotary could on occasion act as a master and a disciplinarian, and that the relations between him and his poet-factotum did not always go smoothly. We have nothing to show what the circumstances of the fault were, save that it sprang out of a violent love passion to which the poet fell a victim; but it is certain that it was punished by dismissal from Messer Angelo's service. And notwithstanding that Berni in after times complains that the uncle did nothing for him, and that the nephew was no better than the uncle, he urgently entreated Messer Angelo's pardon, which after awhile he seems to have obtained. He wrote to his

you not to run from Rome, since it has ended in your seeking so wretched a refuge as Bibbiena! It seems as if neither patron nor dependent looked back with much pleasure to the little place from which they were both sprung.

¹ Evidently some shop joke of the Protonotary's office.

angry patron more than one epistle in Latin verse, the gist of which is to protest his untirable affection, and, admitting his fault, to plead that it was an error deeply repented of.¹

... Nam quod perditus ante malo flagrauerim amore
Et fuerim toto infamia nota foro,¹ . . .

he writes in one of these pieces, admitting that he had publicly disgraced himself. Again in another he addresses his angry patron in this strain :—

Ergo ego, te ante alios unum quem semper amavi,
Unum quem petii toto animo atque animâ,
Cogor in extremas abiturus linguere terras,
Et triste infelix mittor in exilium?
Nec tamen id merui, nisi amor facit ipse nocentem,
Et titulus culpæ est perditæ amasse meæ.²

And there is much more in the same strain. Probably Messer Angelo was not so well aware, as the modern student of his friend Berni is, that of all the men who ever lived Francesco Berni was one of the last who was likely ever to have felt a gleam of disinterested affection for any human being. But it is probable that he was not altogether the dupe of these fulsome protestations. Nevertheless, as has been said, the scapegrace poet was pardoned, and returned to his patron's house—to abuse him subsequently.

The desire which he expressed in the lines quoted in a previous page, to change rack and manger—‘mutare cibo’—was gratified by passing from the service of the Protonotary Dovizi to that of the celebrated Giammatteo Giberti, Bishop of Verona, and *Datario* to Leo X., whose secretary he became. He has recorded of himself in the passage of the ‘Orlando’ which has been so often quoted, that he remained with Monsignor Giberti seven years; and he has also told us elsewhere,³ that he served sixteen years ‘in court,’ i.e. in the families of prelates attached to the Court of Rome.—

La Corte avuto ha in presto
Sedici anni da me d'affanno e stento;
Ed io da Lei ducati quattrocento.⁴

He must therefore have been in the service of the Protonotary

¹ ‘For that, lost as I before was, I burned with a bad passion, and became infamously known to the whole town . . .’

² ‘Must I then, who have always loved you better than all others, who always sought after you with all my heart and all my soul, be compelled to leave you, and go to dwell at the extremity of the earth (perhaps even at Bibbiena itself!) and, miserable as I am, be sent into a wretched exile? And yet I have not deserved it, unless love itself makes one guilty, and the gravamen of my fault is to have loved too well!’

³ Sonnet beginning ‘Se mi vedesse la segreteria.’

⁴ ‘The Court has been served by me with sixteen years of struggles and privations; and I have had from the Court four hundred ducats.’

probably about six years, for he was seven with the Datario; and if we suppose him to have been three with the Cardinal Dovizi—i.e. the years from 1517 to 1520—six years in the service of the Protonotary would make up the time. And we must suppose him to have finally left Rome about the year 1533, when he was about thirty-five years old.

It says something in favour of Berni that he should have retained the position of secretary to such a man as Giammatteo Giberti for seven years. Giberti was not only one of the most learned men of that day in Europe, but, having been made Bishop of Verona at the early age of twenty-nine, he showed himself to be one of the most conscientious, able, and judicious of pastors. His business and administrative talents were so marked, and his knowledge of the general affairs of Europe so large, that Leo could not dispense with his important services in the position of 'Datario,' which, as things were then, embraced the most important concerns with which the Apostolic Court was called upon to deal; and much against his will the good Bishop, who consistently refused all further preferment, was detained at Rome much longer than he would willingly have been absent from his diocese. And to give poor ne'er-do-weel Berni his due, though he ceases not to complain of the horrible necessity of working, he seems to have been better contented with his position as the Bishop's secretary than he was under either of his other masters. But of the four hundred crowns, which he says is all he ever got for his sixteen years' service, in the sonnet which has been already quoted, he declares

Che ve ne son trecento,
O più, a me per cortesia donati
Da duoi che soli son per me Prelati,
Amendue registrati
Nel libro del mio cor, ch'è in carta buona;
L'uno è Ridolfi, e quell' altro è Verona.¹

Giberti's angelic nature compelled gratitude even from Francesco Berni!—a gratitude which was however, as it is painful to say, very ephemeral, as will appear presently. He lets us know that he was often by no means contented with the work he was called upon to do. Upon one occasion—it must have been a little before 1524, for he speaks of it in a letter of that date as a recent incident—he was sent into the Abruzzi to regulate the business

¹ 'But of this, three hundred or more were given to me, out of kindness, by two, who alone to my thinking deserve to be called Prelates; both of them registered in the book of my heart, which keeps durable accounts; one of them is Ridolfi (the Florentine cardinal of that name), and the other he of Verona.'

matters of an abbey, which it is to be presumed his patron the Bishop of Verona held *in commendam*; as he says,

Mandato nell' Abruzzo a far quietanze
E diventar fattor d'una Badia,
In mezzo a certe genti
Che son nimiche delle buone usanze.¹

As I intimated just now, Berni's expression of kindness towards the Bishop of Verona was but an exceptional and passing phase of feeling. The Bishop was his employer, and demanded work from him. And that was all that was needed to ensure Berni's ill-will and abuse. Here is one among many other expressions of his discontent:—

S' io v' usassi di dire il fatto mio
Come lo vo dicendo a questo e quello,
Forse pietà m' avreste,
O qualche Benefizio mi daresti.
Pur fo, pur scrivo anch' io
E m' affatico assai, e sudo e stento
Anchorch' io sappia, ch' io non vi contento!
Voi mi straziate, e mi volete morto,
Ed al corpo di Giove avete 'l torto.²

It was hardly likely that the Bishop, whose first and anxious care it was on taking possession of his bishopric to root out from it all unworthy and incompetent priests, would give a benefice to Francesco Berni. The wonder is that he tolerated him as his secretary for seven years! A portion of these years, however, were passed at Verona, where the secretary seems to have remained very unwillingly. Yet it is clear, from a well-known passage in the 'Orlando' as well as from some other indications, that he wrote a great part of his poem in that city; and when he was not in an ill-humour he could speak well of it. It would seem too, one may remark, from his having composed so long a poem there, that he could not have been so overburdened with work as secretary to the Bishop. Here is the famous passage in which he describes Verona, and its river the Adige. It is a relief to have something to quote that is not malicious and scurrilous ribaldry:—

Tu, che per l' alto, largo, e chiaro letto
Ratto correndo fai grato romore,

¹ 'Sent into the Abruzzi to give receipts, and become the steward of an abbey, among a set of people who are no disciples of the code of good manners.'

² 'If it were my wont to complain to you of my affairs, as I talk of them to this man and that, perhaps you would have pity on me, or would give me some benefice. Yet I labour and write and weary myself enough, and sweat and suffer all sorts of privations, although I know that I do not content you! You wear me out, and would fain I were dead! And, by the body of Jove, you are wrong!'

Raffrena il corso tuo veloce alquanto
 Mentre alle ripe tue scrivendo io canto.
 Rapido fiume, che d' alpestre vena
 Impetuosamente a noi discendi,
 E quella terra sopra ogni altra amena
 Per mezzo, a guisa di Meandro, fendi,
 Quella che di valor, d' ingegno è piena,
 Per cui tu con più lume, Italia, splendi,
 Di cui la fama in te chiara risuona,
 Eccelsa, graziosa, alma Verona !¹

But here is his estimate of the same Verona when he was in his more ordinary mood, and, instead of saying what he deemed ornamental to his epic, spoke his own sentiments. 'Verona,' he says in one of his small occasional pieces of verse,

Verona è una terra ch' ha le mura
 Parte di pietre e parte di mattoni ;

and after thirty or forty lines of sufficiently flat and insipid ridicule, ends by saying that the inhabitants,

Portan tutto l' anno gli stivali,
 Perchè i fanghi immortali
 Ch' adornan le lor strade graziose
 Producon queste ed altre belle cose ;
 Ma quattro più famose,
 Da sotterrarvi un drento insino a gli occhi,
 Fagioli e porci, e poeti, e pidococchi.²

Upon a subsequent occasion, having been called to task, as it would seem, for his abuse of the city, he writes an apology to the following effect :—

S'io dissi mai nessun mal di Verona,
 Dico ch' io feci male e tristamente ;
 E ne son tristo, pentito, e dolente
 Come al mondo ne fosse mai persona.

¹ 'Thou, that in thy deep, large, and clear bed, swiftly running makest a pleasant sound, slacken thy rapid course awhile, what time writing on thy banks, I sing. O rapid river, that with Alpine strain impetuously descendest to us, and cleavest in the midst, after the fashion of the Mæander, that city, pleasant above all others, which is full of valour and genius, by whose virtue thou, O Italy, shinest with a more splendid light, and whose fame resounds glorious in all thy extent, illustrious, gracious, genial Verona !'

The phrase 'a guisa di Meandro' has its justification in the extreme sinuosity of the Adige at Verona.

The stanza and a half quoted have nothing very fine about them. But they are not so bad as they seem in the baldness of a literal translation. The sentence beginning 'rapido fiume' is, it will be observed, not complete.

² 'Verona is a city which has walls partly of stone and partly of brick. . . Its inhabitants wear boots all the year round, because the eternal mud which adorns their sweet streets, produces this among other fine things ; but specially these four famous ones, of which there is enough to bury one over head and ears—beans, pigs, poets, and lice !'

Verona è una terra bella e buona;
 E cieco e sordo è chi nol vede o sente;
 Se, tu, or si perdona a chi si pente,
 Alma città, ti prego, or mi perdona! ¹

There is a curious and amusing difference of tone and manner perceptible between the spontaneous ribaldry of the former outbreak, and the almost perceptibly ironical hyperbole of praise in the apology.

Of his various journeys with his patron the Bishop of Verona, we have no record save here and there a chance word or two in some of his writings, which shows him to have undertaken such. We hear of him at Padua and at Venice, where, he says in a 'Capitolo' addressed to Messer Francesco de Milano,

Stiamo in una contrada, ed in un rio
 Presso alla Trinità, e all' Arsenal,
 Incontro a certe monache di Dio,
 Che fan la Pasqua come il Carnovale;
 Id est che non sono troppo scrupolose.²

He was at Rome at the death of Leo X. in 1521, and at the election of Adrian VI. in the following year, and at that of Clement VII. in 1523. As might easily be guessed, Berni was among those of the clergy at Rome who were most disgusted at the election of a sincere, a simple-mannered and reforming Pope. He has left more than one passage in abuse and ridicule of him. Of his successor Clement VII., the second Medici Pope, he does not speak with more respect. His lines on this unfortunate Papacy, during which Clement was continually striving to hold his own by playing off Charles V. against Francis I., and impartially deceiving both of them turn and turn about, are a really clever *résumé* of Clement's government:—

Un papato composto di rispetti,
 Di considerazioni e di discorsi,
 Di più, di poi, di ma, di sì, di forsi,
 Di pur, di assai parole senza effetti, &c.³

In another place he abuses Clement, of whom in truth it was

¹ 'If ever I said any ill of Verona, I declare that I did ill and unworthily. And I am as sorry, repentant, and grieved at it as anyone in the world can be! Verona is a good and beautiful city; and he is blind and deaf who cannot see it or hear it; if only thou pardonest, as those who repent are pardoned, fair city, I beg of thee pardon me!'

² 'We live in a street and on a canal near the Trinity church, at the Arsenal, close to certain nuns dedicated to God, who keep Easter and Carnival all alike—that is to say, who are not over and above scrupulous.'

³ 'A papacy composed of respects for persons, of considerations, of talk, of "besides," of "thens," of "buts," of "yesses," of "perhaps," of "howevers," and plenty of words without any results.'

impossible that the grossest language should say more than he richly deserved, in terms so atrocious that it is impossible to reproduce them.

It is clear that he was at Rome at the time of the ever-memorable sack of the city by the Constable Bourbon in 1527, and that he lost what little he possessed. It must have been about the year 1533, and about the thirty-fifth or thirty-sixth of his age, that he left the service of the Bishop of Verona, and probably Rome at the same time, to spend the remainder of his days at Florence, on the revenues of a canonry of the cathedral there, which had been given him, before that time, but how long before is uncertain. Neither is it known by whose interest he became a canon of the cathedral. But there can be little doubt that it was given to him by Alexandro de' Medici, with whom for a time he was in high favour. That he possessed this preferment before he left Rome is clear from a letter still extant, in which he says: 'I am going to Florence to make love to my mother for a fortnight or twenty days, and amuse myself a little with the fair one you wot of, attend a little in my place in the choir, and then be off with the grace of God, who knows when we may meet next.'¹

What Berni's 'haunts' were during the years that he lived in Rome may be guessed with tolerable accuracy by those who have read the foregoing pages.

The spots which Dante, which Petrarch, which even jovial, fun-loving Boccaccio, most loved to frequent in the Eternal City may easily be imagined. They would have loved to stand amid the then overgrown and undistinguished ruins of the Palatine, and, wrapped in wonder-born meditation, ponder over the cumbered and scarce emerging ruins of the Forum; to tread the Via Sacra, or from the sun-bathed western front of the unspoiled Lateran gaze across the aqueduct-bestridden campagna, to where the declining sun touched the Alban hills with reddening light, as he touched them when they shaded the street of Alba Longa at their base. But the imagination need take no such flights to picture

¹ The passage in the text is not an accurate translation of the Italian of Berni's letter, which runs thus: '*Vo per la via di Firenze per far l'amore con mia madre quindici o venti di, andare un poco in coro con la sanfarda, e poi truccar via al nome di Dio; il qual sa quando ci rivedremo.*' Italian scholars will understand why I avoid explaining to English readers the cause of the inaccuracy of my translation. But I also confess myself much puzzled by the words italicised. The plain meaning of them seems incredible. But that 'coro' is used in its ordinary sense is clear from the fact that the biographers use the passage to prove that Berni possessed his canonry when he wrote it. And that the lexicographer, Fanfani, supposed 'sanfarda' to be used in its ordinary sense is proved by his quotation of this very passage in illustration of that meaning of the word. I leave the puzzle to Italian scholars to determine whether the passage indicates a trait of Cinque cento manners hitherto unnoted!

to itself the haunts best loved by Berni in the Eternal City. There was a certain club, an 'Accademia,' as it was called after the fashion of the time, the distinctive title of which was more appropriate than the generic one. It was the 'Accademia de' Vignaguoli,' to which most of the wits and poets whom Leo X. called about him belonged, and where Berni was, by general consent, the king of the revels. These were held in the house of Messer Uberto Strozzi, a gentleman of Mantua. Mauro, a slipshod poet of the Bernesque kind; Monsignore della Casa, another Tuscan, a writer of Italian and Latin verse, whose letters and translations from Greek and Latin classics, especially Thucydides, are worth more than his poetry, and whose life and many of whose writings, prelate as he was, are hardly, if at all, less licentious than those of his friend Berni; Fiorenzuola, another small poet. Bini, Molza, Caporale of Perugia, all imitators of Berni, whose *exemplum vitiis imitabile* deceived them, were all 'academicians of the Vintagers Academy;' men, most of them, who 'served cardinals,' or lived as hangers-on of the Church in some capacity or other, and spent their nights together, after days of scribbling in some 'chancery' or other. Could we trace our Berni's other 'haunts' in the City of the Seven Hills with more particular accuracy, the result would not be edifying.

It must have been, as has been seen, about his thirty-sixth year that he settled himself at Florence, to live in the quiet enjoyment of leisure on the revenue of his canonry. And here is his own description of his personal appearance, as we may picture him to ourselves in loosely buttoned, threadbare cassock, lounging lazily across the sunny Piazza del Duomo, while the bell in Giotto's tower overhead is sounding its last summons, to take his place in the choir, and discharge, as perfunctorily as possible, the small duties of his almost sinecure place; in no wise hurrying himself, but stopping at every minute to exchange some jesting word with everyone he fell in with. 'In person,' he says,

Di persona era grande, magro e schietto;
 Lunghe e sottil le gambe forte aveva,
 E 'l naso grande, e il viso largo, e stretto
 Lo spazio che le cilie divideva;
 Concavo l'occhio aveva azzuro e netto;
 La barba folta quasi il nascondeva,
 Se l'avesse portata, ma il padrone
 Aveva con le barbe aspra quistione.¹

¹ 'In figure he was tall, and thin, and clean made; he had long, thin, but strong legs. And his nose was large, as was also his face; but the space which divided the eyebrows was narrow. He had hollow eyes, blue, and well opened; and his thick

The life he led at Florence was such as caused no little scandal even at that day, which one might have thought was impossible. A passage from the unpublished 'History of the Italian Poets,' by Zilioli, which is cited by Mazzuchelli, but which it is impossible to print in its entirety on an English page, tells us that Berni 'died in Florence, whither he had retired not many years before, tired of following courts, and contenting himself with the canonry he possessed in that city. The revenues of this preferment enabled him to lead a very jovial life, enjoying the companionship of men of letters, who competed with each other for his acquaintance; and To this was added the evil report of gluttony, drunkenness, and gambling. So that amusing himself with greater license than became a priest, and sharing in the habits of young men, it often happened that, led by the vivacity and jousness of his high spirits, he fell into disorders and scrapes.' If it had been possible to give the whole of this tolerant censor's account of Berni's mode of life, the nineteenth-century reader would be rather astonished at the quiet moderation of the language with which he closes it!

Nevertheless his companionship was much sought not only by the younger literary men of his own stamp, but by the most magnificent of the aristocracy of the city. He lived, we are told, on terms of great intimacy with both Alessandro de' Medici, and his cousin Ippolito, the Cardinal, much as those two young men hated each other. They constantly used to find him in the palace of the Cybo family (the Princes of Massa), which Alexander was in the habit of frequenting in search of amusement; to which Berni was no doubt very capable of contributing. He had always some new *vers de société*, of a kind adapted to the society in question; something to help empty brains to a laugh. He had an aged mother, an uncle, and two aunts still living at the time, as it should seem, of his own death; and here is the way he described them for the amusement of his friends: 'Why should people go to Rome to see antiquities?' he begins; 'I can show them better antiquities here! I have a mother, and two aunts, and an uncle, who look for all the world like Egyptian gods!

Io gli stimo un tesoro,
E mostrerogli a chi vuol videre
Per anticaglie naturali e vere.
L' altre non son intere !

beard almost hid him, or would have done so if he had worn one. But the master had a special dislike to beards.'

Who the master alluded to was there is nothing to show. But, despite the master's special dislike, the portrait of him still to be seen in the gallery at Florence shows him a handsome-looking man with a big flowing beard.

A qual manca la testa, a qual le mani;
 Son morte, e pajon state in man de' cani.
 Questi son vivi e sani;
 E dicon che non voglion mai morire;
 La morte chiama, ed ei la lascian dire!
 Dunque chi s' ha a chiarire
 Dell' immortalità di vita eterna,
 Venga a Firenze a mia taverna.¹

Rather poor buffoonery, it must be confessed! Friendships of the sort of that which existed between such souls as Alessandro de' Medici and Francesco Berni are not apt to be very durable; and it would seem that Alessandro de' Medici escaped the impartial stabbing of Berni's dagger-pen as little as the exemplary Bishop of Verona. For here is a sonnet, which avenges some real or ancied affront which the Prince had offered to the Poet:—

Empio Signor, che de la roba altrui
 Lieto ti vai godendo, e del sudore,
 Venir ti possa un canchero nel cuore
 Che ti porti di peso a i regni bui!
 E venir possa un canchero a colui
 Che di quella città ti fe Signore;
 E s' egli è altri che ti dia favore
 Possa venir un canchero anche a lui.

 Non potrebb' esser, che non fosse tristo!
 Or tienla col malan, che Dio ti dia,
 Quella, e ciò che tu hai di male acquisto;
 Ch' un dì mi renderai la roba mia.²

A strange story is related by several writers of the sixteenth century, and was apparently generally believed, respecting the death of Berni. Or rather there were two stories; for some relate the matter in one way, and some in another. It is asserted, on the one hand, the Duke Alexander had the poet poisoned for having refused to undertake, at his instance, the poisoning of the Cardinal

¹ 'I deem them a treasure, and will show them to anyone who wants to see them, as genuine and true antiquities. The others are not entire! One is without a head, another without hands! They are dead, and seem as if they had been among the dogs! These of mine are alive and in good condition, and say they don't mean ever to die. Death calls them, and they let him call! So that if anyone has any doubts to clear up as to the immortality of the life eternal, let him come to my shop in Florence!'

² 'Impious lord, who triumphest in the possession of another's goods, and in the enjoyment of another's labour, may a cancerous sore infest thy heart, and carry thee off bodily to the realms of darkness! And may a like infliction fall on him who made thee lord of this city! (Mazzuchelli thinks that the true reading is "*questa città*.") And if there is any other who extends favour to you, may a cancer take him also! . . . Now keep, with a curse, which may God send you, that which you have so foully gained! For the day will come when you shall give up to me what is mine!'

Ippolito. On the other, it is said that it was the Cardinal who asked Berni to poison Alexander, and caused him to be poisoned because he would not undertake the job! There are great difficulties in the way of believing either of these stories to be true. But none of those who have given their time and labour to the investigation of the matter seem to think that any improbability rests upon either statement arising from an estimate of what any of the parties may have been capable of. It seems to be thought not unlikely that the Duke or the Cardinal, or both of them, may have made such a proposal to the Canon. The difficulties connected with the matter are of a more substantial kind—difficulties of chronology. The Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici died in August, 1535, poisoned, as was generally believed, and history has adopted the belief, by, or by the contrivance of, the Duke Alessandro. It is therefore certain that the Poet was not poisoned by the Cardinal for refusing to poison Alessandro. And Mazzuchelli, in his 'Life of Berni,' remarks that it is not probable that he was poisoned by the Duke for refusing to poison the Cardinal, because Berni lived about¹ a year after the Cardinal's death. But I must confess I do not see the force of such an argument. Not even the Duke Alessandro could order and achieve the poisoning of a Canon of Florence, living in his own house, from one day to another! It might surely well be that such a purpose might have to wait a year, or more than that, for its accomplishment. Mazzuchelli thinks that the Cardinal, who no doubt was desirous of murdering his cousin the Duke, might very possibly have been led to think that Berni was a fitting instrument for his purpose by the sonnet above quoted, which indicates so ferocious a hatred towards Alessandro. But would it not be perhaps more in accordance with probability to suppose that the sonnet in question was written in consequence of a similar proposal having been made to the Poet by the Duke? And the expressions in the sonnet, which allude to the possession by the Duke of what belonged to another, may refer to that which had been gained by the death of the Cardinal. The last line however, 'the day will come when you shall render up that which belongs to me—*la roba mia*—' does not seem to tally with such an explanation. Could it have been that the *roba mia* was the wrongfully withheld price, if not of the commission of the deed, of keeping silence respecting the proposition? All the authorities agree in representing that Berni rejected the proposition, whether that of the Cardinal to murder the Duke, or that of the Duke to murder the Cardinal. But that one

¹ It would be more in accordance with facts, I think, to say 'at least' instead of 'about.'

or the other proposition was made can be hardly be doubted, from the consensus of the authorities as to this point, the evidence of which is rendered more strong by their difference as to the other. As far as the character of the poet is concerned, the good to be credited to him on the score of having refused to become a hired assassin has to be balanced, somewhat disadvantageously, by the necessity of placing to his debit the fact that those who knew him well deemed him a promising subject for such a proposition.

Mazzuchelli says that Berni died about a year after the Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici, i.e. in 1536. But the date of his death is very curiously uncertain. Poccianti in his catalogue of Florentine writers says that Berni 'flourished' (*floruit*) in 1550. But this may well be taken as having no pretension to exactitude. Crescimbeni in his history of Italian poetry says that he lived beyond 1538. But neither is this writer's authority worth much on such a point. Niccolò Franco in a supposed letter to Petrarch in the other world, written in 1538, speaks of Berni as having been sent away from Florence by the Medici on account of certain scurrilous writings, and 'where he is now, nobody knows.' But it is thought that the *Medici* here mentioned may have been, not the Princes of the name, but the doctors, against whom Berni had written much scurrilous abuse; that the sending away from Florence may have been sending him to the other world; and that the nobody knows where he is now, may be meant to express doubts as to his fate there. Paolo Giovio, in a letter to the Bishop of Faenza dated May 31, 1535, tells his correspondent as a bit of recent news that Bernia¹ the poet of Arezzo had died of apoplexy, as had also Lucimano, Bishop of Chiusi. But it seems, in the first place, doubtful whether Giovio is speaking of our Berni at all. In the second place, he is always so inaccurate a writer that his authority for a matter of fact is worth little or nothing. And, in the third place, he seems to have been especially untrustworthy on the present occasion, for no such Bishop as 'Lucimano' was ever known at Chiusi, and no Bishop of Chiusi at all died that year.

Then again Annibale Caro writing on June 12, 1539, in reply to a friend who had asked him for a copy of Berni's 'Capitolo dell' Ago,' 'Chapter on a Needle,' which is one of the most licentious of his pieces of verse, writes thus: 'The "Ago" of Bernia is not to be found save castrated and mutilated as you have seen it; because he never published it. And after his death, the copy which goes about was obtained for the most part from Monsignore Ardinghella, who, having heard it recited twice only, learned it by heart. (A nice job for a prelate!) If any further lines can be supplied from

¹ The name was sometimes so written, and sometimes Berni.

the memory of anybody else, I will see to sending it to you entire.' But this letter was written from Rome, which was a very long way off from Florence in those days. It was not written by any personal acquaintance of Berni; and its information seems to me far less to be trusted than that of another letter, which remains to be mentioned. Monsignore Giorgio della Casa, who was, as we have seen, intimate with Berni, writing *from Florence* on December 20, 1543, to his friend Gualteruzzi, says, 'I will give your message to Messer Francesco Berni when I see him.' And that the date of this letter is no typographical error is vouched for by its place in the regular chronologically arranged series of Della Casa's letters. Now it seems to me that this is final; and proves that the other persons whose letters have been quoted, writing at a distance from Florence, were mistaken in supposing the poet to be dead. Their error may perhaps be held to indicate that during the latter years of his life the poet, probably in declining health, led a more quiet and retired life, and was less heard of by his contemporaries in the other cities of Italy. I hold it to be certain, therefore, that Berni lived later than the end of 1543, at which date he would have been only about forty-five.

'The facility of his rhyme, the naturalness of his expressions, the vivacity of his thoughts, and jests, joined to a special excellence of style, are so extraordinary that he must be considered to be at the head of his own school of poetry, which is accordingly named the Bernesque after him. Though some have spoken of him with small esteem, the great body of writers is in accord in awarding him distinguished praise. It is not true that this mode of writing cost him but little trouble, as might be supposed by the reader of it. His original manuscripts show that every line was altered and turned in various manners. The great fault of his works is the abundance of *double entendre*, and indecent allusions, on which the matters treated by him often turn. So that we do not know how to recommend the reading of him to anybody.' This is the opinion of the Conte Mazzuchelli, a layman and a Tuscan. The Roman priest, Crescimbeni, says that in satire 'Berni far exceeded all the other Tuscans except Dante and Ariosto (who was not a Tuscan at all); and if it were not that he allowed himself sometimes to be guilty of an excess of malignity, often joined to impiety, he certainly might have been placed on a level with those poets.' Possibly as much may be said of him as regards Ariosto, though there is often a loftier tone in the 'Orlando Furioso' than Berni ever reaches, and not rarely a beauty of imagery and delicacy of fancy, almost Spenserian, of which the dirty-minded Canon of Florence was incapable. As for the idea that there can exist any

sort of comparison between him and Dante, or that this, that, or the other change or improvement might have entitled him to rank as his equal, the bare notion of such possibility is sufficient to prove, once for all, that Arcadian Crescimbeni, however large a knowledge of his country's innumerable versifiers he may have had, was about as competent a judge of poetry as a bat which flies in the dark chambers of the Great Pyramid may be of its construction.

Berni's name has for the last three centuries occupied, and still continues to occupy, such a position on the Italian Parnassus that it could not fitly have been omitted from our little gallery of the best known Italian poets. But I cannot better conclude this notice of him and his works than by echoing Mazzuchelli's dictum, that I really cannot recommend anybody to read him. The sole real value of his writings now is the contribution they furnish to the picture of the ways, and manners, and morals of his time and clime; and that I trust the reader will have obtained from the foregoing pages.

A Portrait of '83.

YOUR hair and chin are like the hair
 And chin Burne Jones's ladies wear ;
 You were unfashionably fair
 In '83 ;

And sad you were when girls are gay,
 You read a book about *Le vrai*
Mérite de l'homme, alone in May.

 What *can* it be,
Le vrai mérite de l'homme ? Not gold,
 Not titles that are bought and sold,
 Not wit that flashes and is cold,

 But Virtue merely !
 Instructed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau
 (And Jean-Jacques, surely, ought to know),
 You bade the crowd of foplings go,

 You glanced severely,
 Dreaming beneath the spreading shade
 Of 'that vast hat the Graces made ;'¹
 So Rouget sang—while yet he played

 With courtly rhyme,
 And hymned great Doisi's red perruque,
 And Nice's eyes, and Zulmé's look,
 And dead canaries, ere he shook

 The sultry time
 With strains like thunder. Loud and low
 Methinks I hear the murmur grow,
 The tramp of men that come and go

 With fire and sword.
 They war against the quick and dead,
 Their flying feet are dashed with red,
 As theirs the vintaging that tread
 Before the Lord.

¹ Vous y verrez, belle Julie,
 Que ce chapeau tout maltraité
 Fut, dans un instant de folie,
 Par les Grâces même inventé.

'À Julie.' *Essais en Prose et en Vers*, par Joseph Rouget de Lisle ; Paris. An. V.
 de la République.

A PORTRAIT OF '83.

O head unfashionably fair,
What end was thine ! For all thy care,
We only see thee dreaming there :

 We cannot see
The breaking of thy vision, when
The Rights of Man were lords of men,
When virtue won her own again
 In '93.

A. LANG.

The Falstaff of Ossian.

EVERYONE who has lived in Ireland, and a great many who have not, have heard something about Finn Mac Cool. In modern times his name is seldom mentioned without a laugh, so many droll stories concerning him are floating about amongst the Irish peasantry, who alone have kept his name alive, and his fame too, though with rather a dubious lustre. It was not always so, however; for Finn was one of the ancient Irish heroes, and in the native literature there are numberless stories and poems concerning him, in which he is treated as a veritable hero, and his achievements set down seriously and reverently.

Finn was the captain of that giant race of warriors and hunters called the Fianna Eireen, the Fians or Fenians of Erin, and from whom the modern Fenian organisation has taken its name; the notion of rationalistic Irish historians that the Fianna were the militia of the country having led to the adoption of that title.

Without entering any further into the history of Finn, it will be sufficient to say that after a youth of want and privation, and having been hunted to and fro about Ireland by his hereditary enemies the *Clanna Morna*, he eventually gathered around him a sufficient number of loyal Fians to declare war against the *Clanna Morna*, and was in the end declared captain of the Fianna Eireen, his father having held that dignity before him. The adventures of Finn and of his personal friends and associates constitute the Ossianic cycle of Irish bardic history. Ossian was one of these and their bard. All the old stories and poems concerning Finn are put into the mouth of Ossian, who, in addition to being a poet, was one of Finn's bravest and most faithful warriors. Oscar, the son of Ossian, holds the highest place for courage and all other heroic qualities amongst the band, and is at this day the favourite of the whole crew with the Irish peasantry.

The characters of all the heroes who surrounded Finn, and they are not a few, are very clearly defined in the Ossianic literature, a considerable portion of which has been published by the Irish Ossianic Society with an English translation. Grandeur of ideas with extreme homeliness of expression is their most striking peculiarity. The radical diversity between them and all modern representations of Ossianic poetry is seen at a glance. The hugeness and magnificence of the conceptions demand a corresponding

sublimity of language from anyone who in modern times would attempt to do justice to those heroes of Ossian and the times in which they lived.

In the Scotch traditions it would seem that Ossian is credited with having sung all the legendary history of the country. In our Irish literature, however, he is only connected with the Fenian legends, and the achievements of Finn and his comrades, of which band, as I have said, he was himself a prominent figure.

Even in the ancient Ossianic literature of Ireland there is a slight tendency to make fun of Finn. In the tale called the 'Pursuit of Diarmid and Grany,' in which Finn and his Fianna wander all round Ireland in chase of his lieutenant Diarmid, who has eloped with Grany, the daughter of Cormac MacArt, and who had been betrothed to Finn himself, the efforts of Finn to recover the lady are somewhat irreverently treated. It is the story of King Arthur and Launcelot once again under different circumstances. There are many caves in Ireland at the present day called the caves of Diarmid and Grany, and in which the lovers are supposed to have found shelter in their flight.

But, except Finn, who now and then provokes a little surreptitious fun, all the other Fenian heroes are hymned in the full heroic strain. In spite of their number and the diversity of their characters they are always *καλοὶ καὶ ἀγαθοὶ*, and of them we hear nothing bad. The eternal necessities of epic song, however, demanded the presence of a foil to all that mass of heroism, and the character which I have made the subject of this paper was evolved. The resemblance between this character and the Falstaff of Shakespeare is so remarkable that I think a short sketch of his appearance and manners will not be uninteresting.

The Falstaff of Shakespeare seems to be rather a type of human nature than a mere individuality. We see approaches towards his inimitable excellence from time to time. Bald corpulence, with a twinkle in its eye, is not an unfrequent spectacle, and in all such we have Falstaff in the block. If to these natural gifts there were added genius, we would have Prince Hal's friend completely wrought out with not, I think, a point missing; for Falstaff is an ideal to which, under certain conditions, human nature, winged by genius and a keen discernment of what is expected from it, feels itself compelled to soar. No other type than that would completely suit the age at which he finds himself and the unheroic physique in which he is immersed.

The manner in which the character of Falstaff has fascinated the imagination of the world shows what a true perennial type of human nature it must be. John Mitchell, the rebel, writing his

diary on board the convict hulk at Bermuda, makes the following pertinent remarks :—

‘Drew my chair to the door, sat down in the sun, and spent an hour or two reading the “Merry Wives of Windsor.” Thank God for Shakespeare, at any rate. Baron Lefroy cannot sentence Shakespeare to death, nor so much as mulct him in damages, though I am told he deserves it for defamation of character in this case of Sir John Falstaff. The real Falstaff or Falstof, I am assured, was a very grave and valiant knight, and built himself the great castle of Caistor to dwell in; never drank sack in Eastcheap nor made love in Windsor; was neither poor, fat, nor witty, but was in fact as like the other good knights of the period as one shotten herring is like another shotten herring. Well, suppose all this to be what you call true, which, then, is the more real and substantial man? I hold that our Sir John is the authentic Sir John, and that your Fastolf is an impostor. Why, I have seen the man and laughed with him a hundred times; for though he is fat and groweth old and his hair is grey, yet the fine old fellow will never die—in truth he was born with a grey head and something of a round belly. And so he can take his sack still, witty himself and the cause of wit in others even to this day. Oh! I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff.’

The man is a perennial type of human nature. That being the case, it would be strange if, as we meet approximations to him so frequently in real life, he should not have appeared in literature before. As, according to Mitchell, the fine old fellow will never die, so, in my opinion, the fine old fellow ought never to have been born, but to have been coeval with the human race. How and in what form he has appeared in the literatures of other nations I know not; but in the old Irish literature that groups itself around Finn Mac Cool and his Fianna, he has certainly put in an appearance, and for many hundreds of years afforded amusement to the Irish—a very indubitable Sir John, though devoid of that polished and sparkling wit which he acquired in the society of the metropolis of England in the Elizabethan age.

While he disported himself amongst the Fianna of ancient Erin, his name was Conān Mael, Conān the Bald. No story or poem is complete without him; and from the heroic words and deeds of Oscar, Diarmid, and Caelta we are regularly drawn away at intervals to the tricks and fun and mock heroism of Conān, exactly as Sir John relieves the hectoring of Hotspur and the other irreproachable knights of the day.

In the story called the ‘Battle of Cnoc-an-Air,’ the Fianna assembled upon their favourite hill are suddenly warned by various

portents of impending danger. Clouds of blood float in the air; the wise Druid of Tara has announced approaching disaster, and the Fianna are smitten with a panic. Then Conān, whose real character we shall presently see, assumed the rôle of champion.

Conān shouted with a lofty voice,
And it was he that spake sternly and mightily,
'There is no one whose colour changes
But I denounce him as a coward.'¹

To an audience thoroughly acquainted with the character of Conān this verse must have been intensely amusing. The poet first excites the feelings of sympathy and terror, and at the moment when even Oscar is silent, the picture of Conān, with his bald head, corpulent body, and well-known tendency to funk, standing forward to encourage the brave and reprove the timid which the poet so cleverly introduces, must have at each recitation been rewarded with a very hearty roar of laughter.

The translator, a man well acquainted with the Ossianic literature, remarks in a note: 'Conān was the most noisy person in the Fenian ranks;' by the mere use of his tongue and his buffoonery he succeeded in attracting to himself the principal share of the attention of the Fianna, powers which he did not seem to lose in his next avatar.

After this, Conān retires from the scene for awhile; but shortly after, Finn addresses him thus:—

'O Conān the Bald, saith Finn,
'Remain thou in the dark cave of Leth-Ard,
As it is thou who canst shout most loudly
To warn us of the approach of the enemy.

As I suggested before, Sir John has acquired a polish and dignity which are absent in Conān. Shakespeare does not tell us that Falstaff had a very loud voice, but then the inns of Eastcheap did not encourage the display of humour in this direction. Had he lived with the ancient Fians of Ireland, killing and roasting deer, casting huge stones, springing over ravines and indulging in the other amusements of those mighty men, his humour would have acquired a more bodily and a less intellectual character. It would have certainly deteriorated into buffoonery. The whole style of living would not have suited that light, sparkling discourse of his. That Conān, who did not love fighting, should have had a very loud voice, is, I think, true to the type.

¹ 'Transactions of Ossianic Society,' iv. 67. Compare this with Falstaff's 'A plague on all cowards, I say.'

To the exhortation of Finn Conān replies promptly :—

If to the cave I go, O Finn,
To watch for troubles or for hosts,
Alone without any more of the Fians,
May I be pierced through the heart.

This reminds one of the adroitness with which Falstaff drew back from danger.

Fal. Are you not a coward? Answer me that, and Pains there?

Poins. Zounds, ye fat paunch, an ye call me a coward I'll stab thee.

Fal. I call thee a coward? I'll be hanged ere I call thee a coward.

After this, MacLewy and Oscar endeavour to induce Conān to go to the place of danger, complimenting him upon the loudness of his voice. The humour of this scene is not unlike that in the history of Cleon when his political opponents used all persuasion to induce the leather-seller to take a military command.

Eventually Conān proceeds to the outpost attended by Æd Beg, a son of Finn, and half-a-dozen hounds. After a short time, during which the serious element in the poem recurs, we find Conān running back with all his might and ten hounds in full speed after him.

The scene contains exactly the same elements of humour as that in which we see Falstaff's huge body racing down Gad's Hill along with Peto and Bardolf, the hounds supplying the place of Sir John's followers.

On reaching the host he is addressed by Oscar :—

O Conān, lazy, bald, devoid of sense.¹

In the Ossianic scene to which I refer the heroic and the comic are more closely connected than is usual in Shakespeare. While Conān and the hounds with clamour and yelling race back to the host, Æd Beg remains to guard the approaches of the camp, and when Oscar hastens forward to his assistance he finds him undeterred awaiting the enemy.

Of course Conān's character would not be complete if he were not fond of eating and drinking: 'Wherein art thou neat and cleanly but to carve a capon and eat it?' At page 115 in the same volume, the translator relates a short anecdote in the foot-notes, to this effect:—

The Fianna while hunting one day discovered a beautiful mansion with wide open doors. Within were tables loaded with every variety of food and drink. While consuming these good

¹ Compare Prince Henry's frequent abuse of Sir John in the same vein.

things, they were suddenly made aware that the whole palace was melting away visibly like a cloud before their eyes. Struck with fear, they all rushed to the doors except our hero, who would not forsake the good things. When the Fianna returned, they found Conān glued down to the ground by some enchantment. The process of removal seems to have been very painful and amusing. In fact, every introduction of Conān is ever attended with comic circumstances.

At page 149 Conān is again introduced.

Conān, never potent in battle,
And who never sought fame for valour and achievements,
Went to meet Leehane, who, when he came into his presence,
Said, 'Silly is thy visit, thou bald man.'

When Conān came nigh to him,
Leehane fiercely raised his hand ;
'More dangerous for thee is the man behind
Than I before thee,' said Conān.

Leehane the heroic glanced behind,
And quick was the blow made by Conān.
Before he could look round again,
His head was severed from his neck.

Conān did not maintain his ground,
Nor did he ask any to take his place ;
He ran with all his haste towards the Fians,
And flung his blade from his hand.

This deed of treachery seems to have displeased the Fenians, who reprove him for it ; but Conān boldly maintains that what he did was right and that he will do it again. Indeed, Conān's cowardice is to a certain extent assumed, it being a part of his character which he cannot forego without injuring his reputation and doing injustice to his conception of what was required of him. Sir John's cowardice was probably also a bit of fun. The surrender of the bag of money on Gadshill, and the whole of the subsequent scene in the tavern with the 'open palpable' lies, was all probably designed with an instinct of its delightful comicality. That Sir John, who was the cleverest of the whole batch, should have made such a fool of himself unwittingly does not seem to me to be a view which does justice to the profound waggery of the knight.

At page 181, a long and rather tedious lament by a beautiful lady named Ailney over the dead body of her husband and her two sons comes to a conclusion. While the lady wept and chaunted her sorrowful *caven*, the warriors of Finn remained silent reverencing her grief. She concludes with denouncing the host of Finn for

the deed which they had done. This the Fenians do not resent, knowing what cause she had for her language.

Such heroic sentiments, however, did not animate Conān.

'May my body be rent in two,'
Cried Conān, with a surly voice;
'But thou wilt atone, O Ailney bright,
For unjustly stigmatising our hosts.'

Ailney. 'O bald man, of the ugliest aspect
That I have ever yet met on any plain;
I apprehend I have surely paid
For the stigma given and how sad the tale.'

Conan. 'Thou shalt pay more sorely,' said Conān,
'For the scandal thou hast given the Fians.
I will cut off thy head with the golden locks
If I am permitted by Finn of the Fians.'

Ailney. 'Though huge and bulky is thy body,
Though flat and bald is thy skull,
Though thou art big-boned, thick-sinewed, strong,
These are signs that show thee not a hero.'

We, the Fenians, all raised
A shout of joy, and so did the foe,
When the woman rebuked and reproached
The silly bald man Conān.

The bald man became exceedingly angry,
And he spoke with a loud rough voice,
A cause of weeping and of floods of tears (of laughter).
I pray for the Fians and their foes.

The reader will remember that the story is told by Ossian to St. Patrick, which accounts for the last line.

The comic element in this resembles that of the scene in which, to the amusement of Prince Henry, Mrs. Quickly attacks Sir John. In his relations with Conān, the part of Prince Hal seems to be played by Oscar. It is he who alone exercises any influence over the bald man. After what has been above described, Conān draws his sword and rushes at the woman, but receives a blow from Oscar which causes him to roar and bellow.

What an important personage Conān was in the Fenian ranks is evidenced by the delight with which Ossian perpetually recalls him to his remembrance in relating the achievements of the Fenians. Indeed, I think his name is more frequently mentioned than that of any of the others, as if Ossian dwelt upon the recollection of his buffooneries with peculiar pleasure. That Conān, when hard pressed by the exigencies of the fight, was able to render good assistance is shown from time to time. In the battle of Ken-Sleive, which Finn and his Fianna fought against the gods, it is

recorded that 'the three Dónals were slain by the hand of Conān the Bald without any assistance whatsoever ;' whether by stratagem, like the decapitation of Leehane, or with what comical incidents, the narrative does not inform us.

Without multiplying incidents and characteristics, I think it will be plain, from the passages I have given, that in the Irish Ossianic literature the great wag of the Shakespearian drama has put in an earlier appearance, in a raw and rudimentary form certainly, but with all the principal characteristics with which he made his second début on the London stage. Conān, like Sir John, is bald, corpulent, lazy, and fond of good living ; impudent, noisy, and cowardly ; highly unheroic, and exceedingly funny ; attacked, abused, and ridiculed by everybody, but by everybody highly valued for the excellent gifts with which he was endowed ; not a hired buffoon or a low fellow like Thersites, but well born and moving in the best society of the day and very welcome in that ; for Conān was the son of Morna who contended with Finn's father for the captainship of the Fianna, and Conān's fun was not prompted by any other motive than pure love of drollery and of seeing laughing faces about him. Certainly, a person who could make his companions weep for laughter and shed floods of tears must have had very superior social qualities. This reminds us of the effect which Sir John Falstaff's wit had upon Prince Hal : ' Oh, I will make him laugh until his face is like a wet cloth ill-laid up.'

It is strange that hitherto epic poets have made such little use of comic interludes and characters. Even Homer, with his extraordinary cunning in the construction of his poems, seems to have been afraid to venture on this ground. The comicality of the ' Iliad ' is very poor and thin. Milton's attempt in this direction was a signal failure. Yet to the epic poet the comic element is not only useful but essential. The old Irish poets seem to have been profoundly impressed with the truth of this law. There is not an Ossianic poem of any length into which the bald, fat man is not introduced.

STANDISH O'GRADY.

The Going Out of Alessandro Pozzone.

GRANTHORNE AVENUE is a short turning off the Dulwich Road. On each side of the Avenue are a dozen houses or so ; the houses are detached, and let for forty-five pounds a-year. Each house has in front a pretty little piece of garden, and at the back a considerable piece of ground. At the end of the ground, to the rear, is a small green gate, opening upon a narrow private lane. This lane is for the exclusive use of the houses in Granthorne Avenue, there being no other buildings close to the lane on either side. At one end of Granthorne Avenue runs the Dulwich Road ; at the other rises 'a black plank fence six feet high, cutting off the road from fields beyond, where in summer-time well-conditioned cows lie in the rich long grass. The ground at the backs of the houses is not cut up into beds, but each house owns a nice smooth grass-plot large enough for a modest croquet party, and skirted on both sides by a gravel path, at the bottom of the right-hand one of which stands the small green door into the lane.

It was the beginning of June. The month had come in with all the violence of March and all the inconsistency of April ; the fourth of the month had been a remarkably inclement day. It blew a gale from the south, accompanied by occasional brilliant sunshine and deluging showers. As night drew on, the wind abated, but the rain was still heavy and frequent.

At ten o'clock the wind sprung up again, and blew steadily from the west, wailing and soughing through the trees at the back of Granthorne Avenue. At eleven o'clock a terrific shower fell. Most of the lights in Granthorne Avenue were now on the upper floors : the people were going to bed. The sound of the rain was positively alarming, and many persons came to their bedroom windows, drew up the blinds and curtains, and looked out. The rain beat into the fronts of the houses on the left-hand side of the Avenue.

All the basements and the ground-floor windows were dark on the right-hand side of the Avenue. On the left-hand side a light burned in the hall of No. 17, and upon the Venetian blinds of the drawing-room on the ground floor of No. 7 shone a bright cheerful light, and from behind it came the sound of music, a piano and a man's voice, a high tenor flat voice ; the tune and song were Robin Adair.

The shower lasted no longer than ten minutes. The wind and the music outlasted the shower, and at a quarter past eleven the bedroom windows were deserted, and Granthorne Avenue was going to bed.

At a quarter to twelve, Mr. Frederick Morley and Mr. Charles Bell stepped out of a first-class smoking compartment of a train from town at the Herne Hill Station, and walked arm-in-arm to the end of Granthorne Avenue. While they stood a moment at the end of the Avenue, Mr. Bell said, 'I go in the back way when I am late.' Heavy drops began to fall, 'Another shower. What weather for June! Let's get in quickly or we shall be wet through. Good night.'

'I go in the front way,' said Mr. Morley, adding, 'Good night,' as he hastened up the Avenue in the rain, now once more falling in torrents, and beating noisily on the windows of the left-hand side of the way.

From the corner of the Avenue to its first house, extended about fifty yards of blank wall, enclosing the garden at the back of the house on the main road. When Mr. Morley reached the door of No. 8, which was his house, he glittered all over with wet in the light of a lamp just opposite his door. In No. 7, at the other side, the light shone through the blind. Mr. Morley fumbled in his pockets, muttered something to himself, then half aloud, 'Confound it, I've left my latch key behind me. I shall have to knock them up.' He rang and knocked, and drawing himself within the shelter of the porch patiently awaited the result.

Through the beating of the rain and the souging of the wind in the trees, he heard the music from the cheerfully lighted drawing-room of No. 7 opposite. Partly to beguile the time and partly that those in the house might recognise his voice and be not alarmed, he caught up the tune from No. 7 and commenced humming Robin Adair.

For two or three minutes Mr. Morley waited, but heard no stir within. Then he dropped his humming, knocked and rang again, and resumed Robin Adair in a louder tone, keeping time with the instrument over the way.

He heard the bell in the servant's room ring. 'Now it's all right,' he muttered; 'but Matilda is so very nice in her notions, and so very slow in her movements, that she'll keep me here a good five minutes yet.'

After two or three minutes he grew a little impatient, and, to cool his haste, set up a whistling accompaniment to the music from No. 7, remarking, before he started, 'By Jove, our foreign friend opposite does stick to poor Robin!'

He had been in all about five minutes at his door, when suddenly he threw up his head and listened with a look of alarm on his face, as it glittered with rain in the lamp-light.

He listened intently. 'No, no. That was no low of a cow in her sleep. It was a human sound, a human groan.'

There again! There it was again! Confound the rain and the piano. Something wrong at the back of the opposite row of houses. It must have been a loud groan to carry so far. Confound that foreigner and his wretched piano and his everlasting Robin Adair! Could anything have happened to Bell?

Without any more hesitation Mr. Morley set off at a run down Granthorne Avenue, into the Dulwich Road, and turned up the lane at the back of the houses.

Here he shortened his stick in his hand, shook it to see that it and his arm were trustworthy, and advanced more slowly.

He reached the backs of the houses. All was very quiet and very dark. He passed one, two, three doors, and here was four, No. 7, and that interminable Robin Adair wheezing through the window and the rain! But nothing noteworthy or suspicious.

Five, six, seven, eight, nine. This ought to be the back of No. 17, Bell's house. Yes, no doubt.

Bell's door ajar! And, O God! what is this? A dead or stunned man across the threshold, as though he had fallen the moment he entered!

'Help here! Lights, I say! Help! Murder!'

For a moment all was silent save the rain and the wind, and the instrument now faintly heard by Morley. Soon after his cry the tune ceased, the back door of No. 7 opened, a man stepped out and asked in a foreign accent, 'What noise is this? Who called? There is no one hurt, I hope!'

Morley heard the voice and called out, 'Yes, come here, sir, and help me. I fear he is dead.'

'Where are you?'

'At Mr. Bell's back gate. Come and knock his people up. For heaven's sake come. I won't leave him lest the villains come back. I can feel the blood. Feel, it is warm and—salt.'

By this time the foreigner was by the side of Mr. Morley. 'Blood,' said the foreigner, 'hot and salt. Leave me to mind him. I do not know his people. You go tell them of this sadness. No fear of anyone coming back. It seems to be his head that is hurt. Poor man, hot and salt. So it is. You are right, sir. Go at once, I will stay. Go with speed.'

In a short time Mr. Bell's household, consisting of a son and daughter and maid-servant, were aroused, the wounded man was

carried into the house by Mr. Morley, Sig. Cordella, the foreigner, and Mr. John Bell, son of the victim. A little later came surgeons and the police. The doctors gave little hope; the junior of the two sat up all night; and in the morning, at six o'clock, Mr. Charles Bell passed away without having had one moment of consciousness.

Next day, that is on June 6, the inquest was opened, and the facts disclosed were briefly these :—

Mr. Morley, the last person known to have seen the deceased before he had received the fatal blow, swore that he had known the late Mr. Bell about five years. Had become acquainted with him in a railway carriage, soon after deceased came to live at Granthorne Avenue. They both went into town by the same train every morning. So they had grown to be quite intimate. Rarely came out with deceased in the evening or at night. Witness usually got home about 7 P.M., and, he understood, deceased not until nine or ten usually; and often not until midnight: the deceased had told him this. On only two or three previous occasions had he and deceased come home together so late as on the night of the 4th. His memory was quite clear on every event connected with that night. Witness then described his parting from the murdered man at the end of the Avenue, the wind and rain, the delay at his own door; how free from all suspicion of danger to his friend he was, for, while waiting for his door to be opened, he caught up the tune his neighbour Sig. Cordella was playing, and was whistling it, when his attention was attracted by the groan. How he ran round to the back lane, found the injured man, knew Sig. Cordella was up and called for help. How the Signore came and supported the injured man until further help arrived, and they carried the dying man into the house.

Next came Sig. Roberto Cordella, of No. 7, a native of Italy, who swore that towards midnight on the 4th, he being then enjoying some music, heard a cry from the back of the houses, and going out found matters as described by the former witness. Sig. Cordella had lived only a few months, about five, in Granthorne Avenue, during which time he had had no intercourse of any kind with deceased. Witness was a retired music master. Did not remember ever seeing deceased. This was partly explained by the fact that, as a rule, Mr. Bell came home late of nights, and, as the last witness swore, usually went in the back way, as on the night of the murder. The witness said he had been greatly shocked and shaken by the melancholy occurrence. Being a foreigner he knew little of such legal proceedings as the present; and in conclusion he asked the coroner if he were now

free to retire. The coroner told him he might go down ; and, although there was no great likelihood of his being required further, still he had better remain within hearing ; there was no knowing but they might have to recall him. Sig. Cordella bowed and stepped down.

The medical evidence was simplicity itself. Deceased had died from injuries to the back of the skull. Two blows had been inflicted. One apparently as the deceased was entering the garden gate ; the other as he lay on the ground. The former had smashed in the poll, and would have been quite sufficient to cause death. The second had battered in the right temple and cheek bone, leaving on the wet earth the impression of the left side of the face. The injuries from which the man died were, no doubt, inflicted by the stone produced by the police. [The stone was a piece of flag eighteen inches long, six inches wide, and three inches deep.] On the stone human hair, human blood, and particles of flesh corresponding with wants in the head of deceased were to be seen. All the organs in deceased's body were healthy, and he had been a powerful man notwithstanding that he must have been past sixty years of age.

The evidence of the police followed :—

The stone produced by them was one of many similar in the lane. They had found nothing else of any consequence. There were upon the clothes of Mr. Morley and Sig. Cordella such blood-stains as would be accounted for by the succour they had given the deceased. No suspicious people or person had been seen lurking about the place. Supposing the assassin had run from the back door of No. 17 to the Dulwich Road end of the lane, starting at the same moment as Mr. Morley from his house, Mr. Morley would surely have seen him, as the Road was quite straight, well lighted, and at this point afforded no shelter or means of concealment.

Mr. Morley : ' I saw no one.'

It was true that from the back of No. 17 to the board fence at the field end of the lane was a less distance than from the same point to the Road, and that the murderer would have had time to reach that fence, scale it, and drop into the field at the other side before Mr. Morley could have come round the other end of the lane.

Up to this point the whole inquiry had gone on without exciting any exceptional interest, and the majority of people present seemed to have made up their minds that the criminal, having given the fatal blows, had run down the lane, scaled the fence, and escaped through the fields. The further evidence of the police produced a profound sensation, bordering upon dismay ; and those

closely connected with the case began to regard one another half in suspicion, half in fear. The officer continued :—

But it was quite certain that neither on the night of the murder nor the day before it had anyone crossed the fence; the reasons for thinking so were conclusive. On June 3 ten cart-loads of fine building sand had been backed against that wooden fence on the field side, and on the morning of the 5th no trace whatever of footsteps or disturbance could be found in this sand. The walls of the lane were of smooth brick and high, thirteen feet, for wall-fruit, and no man could possibly reach their summit without a ladder; and not only was no ladder found, but not the smallest fresh scratch upon the walls, the surface of which was soft from moisture and would show the scratch of even a thumb-nail. On the field side, the sand, intended for a wall to be built in place of the wooden fence, overlapped the end of the lane many feet. Through interstices between the planking of this black plank fence some sand had percolated into the lane and lay in a fine smooth mat, four feet wide from the planking. From this sand the rain falling at the time of the murder might obliterate, or at least deaden, foot-marks; but the sand in the lane was examined with lamps in less than an hour after the fatal blow was struck, and when the rain had been falling only about ten minutes after the blow, and yet no foot-marks had been found. The sand at the other side of the lane was sheltered by two large chestnuts and showed perfect shovel marks of the day before, but no trace of footsteps whatever. No arrests had been made yet.

The son of the deceased was next called. He had not much to tell; such as it was the substance is as follows :—

His father had passed his sixty-third year. Had been at one time an out-door officer of Customs; last stationed at Avonford. About fifteen years ago he had been obliged to leave the Customs owing to a severe rheumatic affection contracted while on duty. At that time and for many years afterwards, witness, who was now seven-and-thirty years of age, was in Australia and did not know details. After retiring from the Customs, deceased came from Avonford to London, and set up a grocery business in Baroda Street, Oxford Street. The business had been prosperous; and some years ago deceased had taken his present house, where deceased, being a widower, lived with his daughter and a maid-servant until now. Witness upon coming home on leave last year joined his father's household and had lived at No. 17 ever since.

Evidently the disquieting discovery of the police caused the coroner to proceed with much more care and deliberation than he had employed in the earlier stage of the inquiry, and he examined

the son with great fulness and most minutely. In answer to further interrogation the son went on:—

On the morning of the 4th, Mr. Bell left home for town at the usual hour, half-past eight. He ate a hearty breakfast and seemed in excellent spirits. The last words witness heard his father utter were said just as deceased was leaving: ‘Don’t wait up. I shall be late to-night. Leave the dining-room door open.’ The last sentence referred to the door from the dining-room into the back garden. This door opened on a little exterior landing which communicated by means of a flight of steps with the garden. By ‘Leave the dining-room door open,’ deceased meant on the latch or spring lock, for which deceased had a key. It was deceased’s habit when he returned late to come in by the door, bolt it, eat a little supper, have a glass of grog and a smoke before going to bed. On the night in question, witness went to bed as usual at a little after eleven, fell asleep, and was soon roused by Mr. Morley knocking at the kitchen door and calling for help. Witness got up, put on some clothes hastily, and came down. That was all he could say of the whole affair. The police had found his father’s purse and watch upon the person of the injured man. Didn’t think his father had a personal enemy in the world. As far as witness knew not a soul but he himself would benefit by his father’s untimely death. His sister would be a loser by it.

The maid-servant and the daughter of deceased were briefly examined as to the events on the night of the murder and dismissed; and, it being then evening, the inquiry was adjourned for a week to give the police an opportunity of investigating the case further. Before rising, the coroner made an order for the interment of the body.

Next day John Bell was busy about the funeral. Many of the friends and acquaintances of the deceased made visits of condolence and all the neighbourhood was full of horror at the awful deed, regret for the pleasant inoffensive man who had been done to death, and sympathy for the son and daughter.

It was midnight before John Bell found himself alone. He was a tall, powerful man, with red-brown beard, brown eyes, a bronzed face, and brown strong hands. When at rest in ordinary times his face had a stern expression. You could see he was not a man to be trifled with. In movement he was slow, ponderous. No matter what he did it seemed as though he had fully considered it before commencing to move; once action begun, there was such an evidence of the means to the end that few would think of trying to stand between him and his object. As he sat in the hideous stiffness of his new black clothes, a cruel smile played upon his

features alternately with a look of profound and passionless thought. He sat by the open dining-room door through which Mr. Morley, Sig. Cordella, and himself had carried the dying man on the night of the 4th. This night there was neither wind nor rain. The houses all round were still, and Nature slept like a weary child, without a cry or a sigh.

The police had carefully examined Mr. Bell's house in the hope of getting a clue to the murderer. They had asked to see Mr. Bell's private papers, and these had been shown to them. They had read some of the documents, and, having made notes, felt no further need of the papers, and gave them back to Mr. John Bell. These letters, diaries, memoranda, &c., were now lying in a confused heap on the dining-room table. For an hour John Bell had been sitting at the open window in a profound reverie. He now aroused himself, turned up the gas fully (it had been half turned down), drew a chair close to the table, and commenced turning over the papers, now reading one through, now merely glancing at another. At last he came to one which seemed to interest and excite him greatly.

It was a lengthy document in his father's writing, and was battered a good deal and showed signs of wear and tear and age. He did not wait to finish reading it, but got up hastily, left the room, went into the hall, pulled out the drawer in the hall table, took from the drawer a small slip of paper on which were written a few words, came back to the room, held the slip of paper and the document he had been reading, one in each hand, under the gas-light, and compared one line of the old document with the slip; then let both fall from his hands, shivered, covered his face with his hands, and sank down into a chair.

He remained for half an hour absolutely motionless, save for the regular rising and falling of his broad back. At the end of that time he rose, finished the reading of the sheets of old paper, folded them up, put them in his breast pocket, and placed the small slip which he had taken from the drawer in his watch pocket. When this was done he put his hand under his coat tails for a moment, as if to tighten the back strap of his waistcoat, did not tighten the strap, went and got his hat, descended the steps from the dining-room into the garden, opened the garden gate, and went out into the lane.

It was then about half-past one in the morning.

The place was still as death; the trees stood up silently in the darkness; the dark violet vault of heaven hung spread with myriads of pale stars overhead. John Bell looked warily up and down the lane. 'It is very dark and very late,' he thought, as he

closed the garden door behind him, 'but it will be darker and later before the dawn.'

He turned towards the Dulwich Road, and walked very slowly down the lane. He reached the end of the lane, turned to his left, and again to his left. He was now in the Avenue, and taking the left-hand footway he commenced ascending the Avenue. He passed by the blank wall and the houses 1, 3, and 5. These were all dark. In the drawing-room window of No. 7 there was a light. Not a ray in any other house in the Avenue. John Bell drew back the bolt on the garden gate, entered the garden, went up the steps, and knocked very softly. In a few seconds the door was unchained, unlocked, and unbolted, and Sig. Cordella, recognising him at once, cried, 'Ah, Mr. Bell, is it you? There is nothing more wrong, I hope?'

'There is nothing new wrong,' answered the visitor; adding, 'I know this is a most extraordinary time for making a call on a comparative stranger, but seeing your light burning, and being greatly troubled and disturbed in my mind, I ventured to knock.'

'Come in,' said the foreigner, 'come in. I always sit up late. Come in and rest with me for some time.' He led the way into the drawing-room.

The room was furnished in good taste. The colours were all cool and grey, rather French than Italian. There were no pictures on the pearl-grey walls. The drapery and upholstery were of a delicate shade of deep fawn; the carpet a dull amber. Against one wall stood a cottage piano, on which lay a guitar. In a corner was a violin case, and upon a table opposite the door a large musical box and a silver flute. A couch was drawn halfway across the window, and at the foot of the couch stood a small inlaid table. Scattered about were a few ordinary drawing chairs, and at the table one easy-chair. Upon the inlaid table were placed cigars, a tobacco jar, a cigarette book, an ash tray, and a box of matches. Although the room was a small one, three gas jets were at their full height, and John Bell was compelled to shade his eyes for a moment.

'You will sit down?' said the Italian, waving his hand to the chair by the table and sinking softly on the couch himself.

∴ Bell hesitated a moment, looked slowly round the room, and then said, 'I will.'

The Italian rolled up a cigarette, lighted it, and threw himself into the arm of the couch. He was a low-sized man of about five-and-forty years of age, bald, dark-skinned, black-bearded, black-eyed, with black heavy eyebrows—not at all a pleasant face. Although there was always a faint smile on the features, it seemed

a smile the motive for which had passed away, and that the smile itself ought to have passed away too. It was the fag end of a stale smile, and the face would have been much improved if it had been swept off altogether. Notwithstanding this unpleasant smile the Italian's face was handsome, eminently handsome.

John Bell was evidently a little perplexed, for he paused awhile before even attempting to offer an explanation or apology for his late visit. At last he spoke :

'As you may fancy, Mr. Cordella, nothing but a matter of great importance could induce me to intrude upon you at this time of night.'

'Pray, no apology. I know how troubled you must be in your mind. I sympathise with you ; I sympathise with you out of my heart, indeed, Mr. Bell. In your trouble you no doubt could find no sleep, so you come out for a walk, for fresh air, and you see my light, a neighbour's light, and you come in. Make nothing of it. I always sit up till late—these times till daylight. Will you smoke ?'

'I will smoke, thank you. But, Mr. Cordella, it was not accident brought me here to-night ; I came on purpose. I came on most important business. I owe you thanks for your great kindness on that awful night—I have come now to make but a poor return. I am sorry to say that I find it absolutely necessary to ask you some questions which, though they may seem impertinent at the outset, are of vital consequence to me. You will answer me without taking offence for what must seem an unpardonable and outrageously ill-timed intrusion and an unwarrantable inquisitiveness.'

'Indeed you may ask, and indeed I will answer,' said the Italian, waving his hand softly through the smoke of his cigarette.

'Remember before I begin that I will ask you no question which is not of importance, and that I have excellent cause to risk seeming impertinent in order to get the information I require.'

Speaking through a veil of smoke the Italian answered : 'I have told you, Mr. John Bell, that I will answer you. What is it that I have to conceal ?'

'Nothing, no doubt, about yourself, but I am not come to speak about yourself. I want to ask you some questions about another. First and foremost, you and I are in this room ; who else is in this house ?'

The Italian took his cigarette slowly from his lips with his left hand, emerged from the smoke, and leaned towards John Bell until his left elbow rested on the couch. Then thrusting his right hand softly between his waistcoat and shirt at the breast he looked up

into John Bell's face with an expression of playful surprise. 'Why?'

John Bell took his cigar from his mouth and moved only his eyes towards the other. For a moment the two men regarded one another as though neither had the faintest clue to what was in the mind of the other, and each was very desirous to get some insight into the thought of the other before proceeding further. Said Bell, 'That is not a very clear answer to my question, is it?'

'No; but you come to me telling me you are curious to know some things. You come at two o'clock in the morning; that is strange. Then you ask me a strange question; that, too, is strange. You make me feel, like yourself, curious. You must not feel angry with me if I feel curious, and ask you why do you want to know who else is in this house?'

'You are quite right,' said John Bell. 'I was most unreasonable in expecting that I, who am almost a complete stranger to you, had any right to question you about your household without giving ample reason. I'll give you the reason now, and repeat the question when I have done so.'

'It is so kind of you,' said the Italian, drawing his hand out from under his waistcoat, and gently resuming his old pose in the arm of the couch. As he lay back he touched his chest, and said with an apologetic smile, 'I have the heart disease, and any shock or thing gives me, ah! such great pain. When you asked me that strange question I thought I should die. You will pardon me; your father's sad fate has quite unnerved me for a moment. Ah! you will pardon me! I feared—well, I feared you wished to know whether—cannot you understand?' He closed his eyes and drew back his lips from his teeth, and inhaled painfully through his set teeth.

'I am very sorry that you suffer from heart disease, and I am very sorry I have caused you pain. I can now see my question in another light, and that it was equal to an inquiry into your means of defence. I am sorry I was so abrupt. I hope you will forgive me and hear me out, Mr. Cordella?'

The Italian opened his eyes with an expression of pain and effort, answering very gently, 'Do not make any further apologies, Mr. Bell; please go on. I am quite able and most willing to listen.' He closed his eyes again and gradually grew paler.

John Bell shook himself back into his chair. 'It will take some time,' he said, 'and I shall have to go back to the 4th of June. My father left home as usual at half-past eight. You may remember on that day in the forenoon a particular letter was dropped in the box of No. 17, my father's house. That letter was

not for anyone we knew, being addressed to ' (here John Bell took the slip of paper out of his watch-pocket and read from it) 'Sig. Alessandro Pozzone, 17 Granthorne Avenue, Dulwich, Londra.' 'Knowing that you were an Italian, and being ignorant of your name, and seeing how easily the mistake between 7 and 17 might arise, and finding the post-mark of "Torino" on the envelope, I wrote a line to "The Owner of No. 7," inclosing the foreign letter and asking you if it were for you.'

'You were most thoughtful.'

'To my note I signed my name. You returned a verbal message, saying that the foreign letter was not for you; that you knew nothing whatever of the person, Alessandro Pozzone, to whom it was addressed; and that you yourself would return it to the postman when next he called. You gave your message verbally, accompanied by your card. This was about noon. By your card and from your evidence at the inquest I learned that your name is Roberto Cordella. You will, I hope, pardon my great minuteness, but all this is really of prime importance.'

The Italian was rolling up another cigarette; he paused, opened his half-closed eyes, and signified by a gracious gesture that he was paying attention and held himself completely at the disposal of the other.

'At twelve o'clock that night my father was murdered.'

'Yes,' through a dense cloud of tobacco smoke.

'About an hour ago I came on a document which I will now take the liberty of reading to you. It is in my father's handwriting and relates to an event in his own experience—I fear I'd better stop. Your heart seems to trouble you again.'

'It is nothing; pressing it thus relieves it. Please go on.'

John Bell drew the paper out of his breast coat pocket and began to read. When the foreigner saw the document he nestled still more cosily into the arm of the couch, rolled up another cigarette and, when it was closed, replaced his hand over his heart.

'This paper,' began Bell, 'is apparently the rough draft of a report, to whom furnished it does not say. It is dated Avonford, September 18, 1865 :—

SIR,—At the earliest moment my health will allow I hasten to furnish you with a report of the events connected with the loss of the customs boat, 'Swift' and two men on the 14th ult.

On the afternoon of the 13th ult., the Italian barque 'San Giovanni Batista' being then cleared out and hauled out into the tide-way ready for sea, I received information that the customs officer in charge was in some way or other to be tampered with, the seals on the ship's stores broken, and the twenty-six thousand

cigars under seal run ashore as soon as it was dark. I immediately ordered four men—namely, James Archer, John Brown, William Flynn, and John Plucknett—into the 'Swift' and pulled down to the 'San Giovanni,' myself steering; and she being then about a mile to the westward of Dockyard point with her anchor hove short ready to trip before she tended on the first of the ebb.

It was dark before we made her out; the night was clear with a new moon but not much light. The wind was then pretty much up and down the mast, but any little air there was being off the land. All the barque's sails were hanging loose. As soon as we got within half a mile or so we heard the windlass going. I stood up to watch her. I saw her head come up with a jerk and then I saw her veer when the anchor hung free. They began setting the sails, and the wind freshening a little the canvas commenced to fill, and she began to forge ahead. But I knew we could overhaul her, hand over hand, and we were overhauling her, for we were pulling two feet to her one.

We were coming up on her starboard quarter, and I saw a boat (not one of her own, they were all painted white, and this one was black and British built) by the starboard main-chains. 'The cigars are in that boat,' I thought, and I said to the men, 'Give way, men, give way with a will.'

My men gave way with a will, and I kept the 'Swift' heading for the starboard mizen chains of the barque. There was fair steerage way on the barque now.

When we were about three cables' length astern I hailed the barque. She did not answer. A man came and looked over the taffarel and I heard an order given on deck. Upon the order being given the barque ported her helm until her head looked two points to port, then there was another order and the barque steadied her helm and kept on. This brought us right astern of the barque. The sails were now beginning to draw better every stroke we pulled, and as I did not like to lose any time I kept head on to her stern, although I did not a bit like her manœuvre.

As soon as we were about a cable's length off I hailed again. Still no answer. When we were half a cable's length I sang out once more. Said we were revenue officers and told them to come round and let us board.

'What do you want the ship to stop for?' asked the man at the taffarel whom I now knew quite well and who was not one of the crew of the 'San Giovanni Batista.'

'Whose boat is that alongside?'

'The Vice-Consul's.'

'Send the customs' officer in charge aft.'

'He's gone ashore in the pilot's boat.'

'It's not time for either pilot or the customs' officer to go ashore yet. Who's taking the vessel out?'

'The channel pilot.'

'Come round, I say, I must board. I must see the captain and I must see the Vice-Consul's boat go ashore before I leave the ship.'

We were now only a couple of boats length from the stern post, dead astern. I did not like to yaw the boat to get round to the mizen chains, as it was easier to keep in the back water of the wake, and beside the barque had got more legs under her by this time, and I could do little more than keep up to her.

Foot by foot we drew up on the barque until at last we were right under the stern. I sang out again:

'If you won't come about heave us a line.'

'Ay, ay!' cried the man on the taffarel.

For a moment I saw him rise up, standing on the taffarel; he leaned forward with a heavy three-tackle block in his hand—I saw the moonlight through the block—and then dropped the block into the ‘Swift.’ It came aboard on the foremost bow thwart, broke it in two, and stove out the bottom of the boat.

Before we could do anything the boat was full of water and turned bottom up. As long as we could we shouted. The barque kept her course until we could not even see her, and there was no other vessel in sight. James Archer, John Plucknett, and I clung on the bottom of the boat until morning, when the fishing boat ‘Toby’ of Avonford saw us and took us off.

After the boat filled and turned over I never saw either John Brown or William Flynn alive. I saw the body of William Flynn when it was washed ashore next morning.

John Bell stopped reading, folded up the paper and replaced it in his breast pocket. As he did so he glanced at the recumbent Italian. The attitude of the latter was unchanged. Still the right hand thrust between the waistcoat and the breast of the shirt in the region of the heart; still the luxurious pose in the soft arm of the chair; still the everlasting cigarette and the cloud of ascending blue smoke. The foreigner now spoke in a voice of one who suffered not a little, and caught his breath uneasily.

‘I have not the least dislike to tell you the answer to the question which I did not answer a while ago. There is at present none in this house but you, I, and the old woman, my servant and housekeeper. I am a bachelor, and there is no relative or friend or guest of mine under this roof now. Having answered you so far, and, as far as you have shown, answered you without knowing how the painful history you have read may be connected with your question, will you permit me to say that it is very late, and that I am far from well. I am most ill.’

‘I am exceedingly sorry you should feel so poorly. I will not intrude much longer if you will permit me to explain.’

The Italian smiled languidly, signified that the other might proceed, and closed his eyes with an expression of great pain and exhaustion.

‘I shall soon be done. The man who murdered the two men in the boat that night was interpreter to the Vice-Consul at Avonford. He was never found to answer for that crime. My father knew that this man was to endeavour to run the cigars. Next day the Vice-Consul’s boat with the cigars untouched was found in a bight of the Avon bay. But the Vice-Consul’s interpreter, the murderer, was never found. The barque, bound to Callao, never arrived in any port; it is believed she foundered in mid-ocean.

‘Now this Vice-Consul’s clerk or interpreter, knew my father well by name and appearance, often had business intercourse with my father. On the night of the 4th of this month my father

was murdered by this self-same Vice-Consul's clerk. As sure as I live here he murdered my poor father, Mr. Cordella.'

'Why are you so sure of that? and what can I do for you in this sad case?' demanded the foreigner, in a tone so languid and so faint that John Bell was compelled to draw near and bend low in order to hear.

'In the forenoon of the 4th that letter came to No. 17, mis-addressed, intended to be left for Alessandro Pozzone at No. 7. You, Mr. Cordella, forwarded my note to Pozzone with his own one; he recognised the name Bell, found out who my father was, lay in wait for my father and killed him before my poor father could get home and recognise the name of the man who fifteen years ago failed to do for him—for that Vice-Consul's clerk who let fall the block was Alessandro Pozzone.'

'I am completely prostrated by the news you tell me,' whispered the reclining man. 'Get me a little wine from the chiffoniere. Since this matter is so dreadful I will now admit that I know Pozzone well. He represented to me his dangers were political, and I was sworn to divulge nothing about him.'

John Bell put an arm under the other man; from the fingers of the foreigner dropped the end of the half-smoked cigarette.

Bell held the wine to the recumbent man's lips. He drank a little and then whispered, 'Put down the wine. I can swallow no more. I am better—I am better, thank you; I shall be all right soon.' His right hand fell out of his breast, and lay upon the floor. 'Go on,' he whispered, 'I am most anxious to hear what you want me to do.'

'Tell me where Pozzone is.'

'I can, and I will. It is only right you should know, and at once. I will place him in your grasp in less than an hour. Ah! Ah, my breath once more—I am suffocating! Put your two strong arms round me and raise me.'

John Bell did as he was requested.

'Wait a second,' said the Italian, resting his two arms on the shoulders of the other.

'I can speak once more,' whispered the Italian. 'Your ear now. So. Now I will tell you where Pozzone is—In your arms! Now I will tell you where his knife is—In your heart!'

The Englishman drew himself up with a powerful effort, shook himself clear of his assailant, slipped his hand beneath his waistcoat as though to loose its strap, drew out the hand—

Bang!

But Pozzone had seen his action, and, suspecting it, dashed the hand aside. The ball struck the musical box, and with a loud

crash smashed off the brake-end, the barrel began to revolve, and the teeth to vibrate—Robin Adair!

A superstitious fear seemed to seize upon Pozzone, and he whispered through his white lips, 'I played that air on the piano, and then I set the box to it and went out—

Bang!

This time Pozzone staggered to his feet and steadied himself for an instant. He raised his hand to his forehead. His hand grew suddenly red.

'Warm and salt,' he cried; 'I set the box to Robin Adair and—went out. Curse it! What's this? Ah you'll never lift that revolver again, John Bell. Bell! Bell! Robin Adair. I set the—there's Robin Adair again! Am I never to hear anything else here or in—— I set it to Robin Adair and went out—I am going out again! Am I to be always going out to the tune of Robin Adair, here and in—hell?'

RICHARD DOWLING.

Two Moods.

I. HATE.

DRAWN o'er the airy sapphire of the day
 In vague perpetual way,
 He sees one dulling film of dreary gray.
 The fragrant sward, or dewy leaves that shine,
 Flower, bird, or lissom vine,
 All hold weird hints of something saturnine !
 Big weights of wrong and insult, always pressed
 Upon his tired-out breast,
 Imperiously distract him with unrest !
 And through his mind quick ghastly fancies float,
 Where sometimes he can note
 His enemy's loathsome shape, and clutch its throat !

II. LOVE.

FOR him alone the exultant thrushes call,
 The grand suns rise and fall,
 And the sweet winds blow benedictional !
 A sovereign sense his being seems to brim,
 Thrilling heart, brain, and limb,
 That all this radiant world was wrought for him !
 One blissful faith his life divinely cheers
 With heavenly joys and fears,
 That sometimes leave his sight in holy tears !
 And through his soul, rich-warmed by sacred heat,
 Dear memories move and meet,
 Like shadowy ripples over golden wheat.

EDGAR FAWCETT.

The Return of the Native.

BY THOMAS HARDY.

BOOK FOURTH.

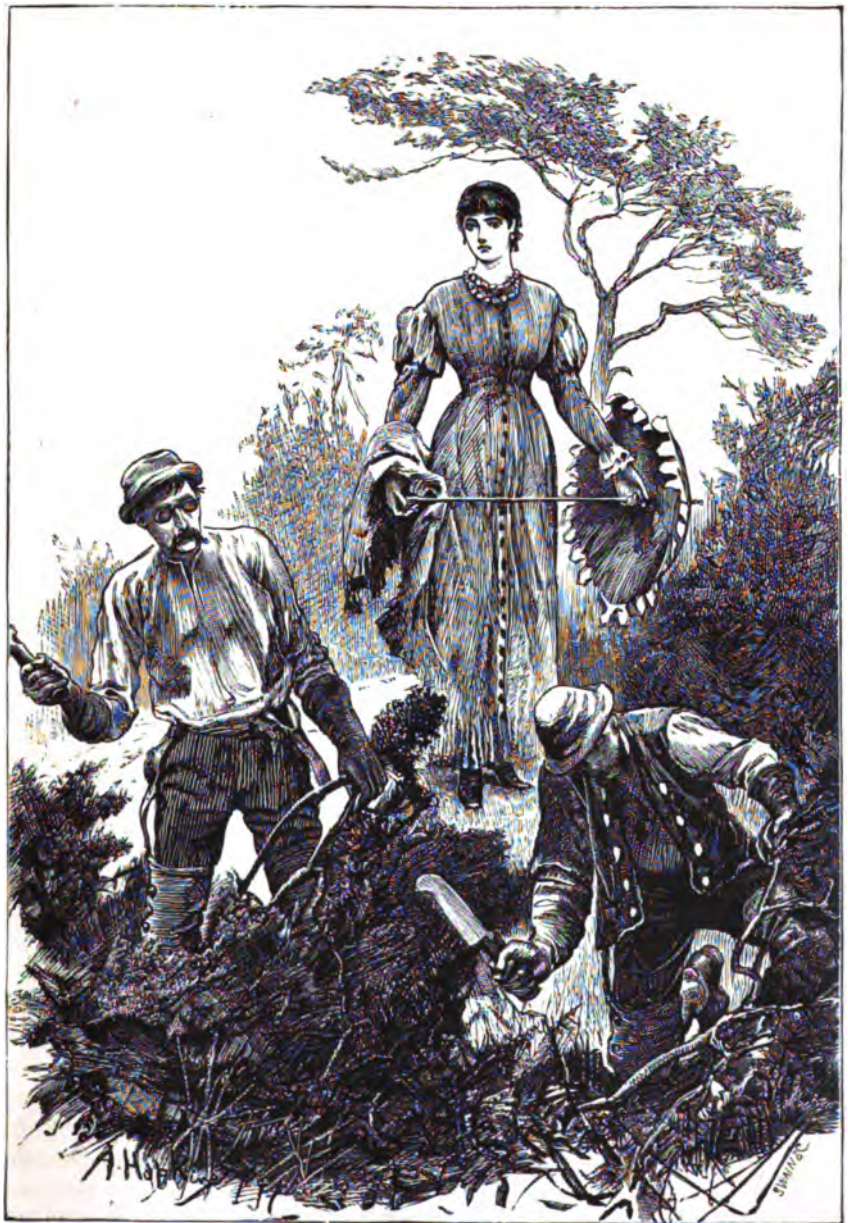
The old affection between mother and son reasserts itself, and relenting steps are taken.—A critical conjuncture ensues, truly the turning-point in the lives of all concerned.—Eustacia has the move, and she makes it; but not till the sun has set does she suspect the consequences involved in her choice of courses.

CHAPTER I.

THE RENCONTRE BY THE POOL.

THE August sun shone over Egdon, and fired its crimson heather to a scarlet glow. It was the one season of the year, and the one weather of the season, in which the heath was gorgeous. This flowering period represented the second or noontide division in the cycle of those superficial changes which alone were possible here; it followed the green or young-fern period representing the morn, and preceded the brown period, when the heath-bells and ferns would wear the russet tinges of evening; to be in turn displaced by the dark hue of the winter period, representing night.

Clym and Eustacia, in their little house at Alderworth, were living on with a monotony which was delightful to them. The heath and changes of weather were quite blotted out from their eyes for the present. They were enclosed in a sort of luminous mist, which hid from them surroundings of any inharmonious colour, and gave to all things the character of light. When it rained they were charmed, because they could remain indoors together all day with such a show of reason; when it was fine they were charmed, because they could sit together on the hills. They were like those double stars which revolve round and round each other, and from a distance appear to be one. The absolute solitude in which they lived intensified their reciprocal thoughts; yet it had the disadvantage of consuming their mutual affections at a fearfully prodigal rate. Anybody but themselves might have recollected that the early love of a man and wife who, by pressure of circumstances, are only able to meet and think of each other one hour a day, will last twelve times as long as the early love of those who indulge in that pleasure from morning to night. Yeobright did not fear for



'Unconscious of her presence, he still went on singing.'

his own part; but the rapidity with which Eustacia's passion glowed sometimes caused him to ask himself a question; and he recoiled at the thought that the quality of finiteness was not foreign to Eden.

When three or four weeks had been passed thus, Yeobright resumed his reading in earnest. To make up for lost time he studied indefatigably, for he wished to enter his new profession with the least possible delay.

Now, Eustacia's dream had always been that, once married to Clym, she would have the power of inducing him to return to Paris. He had carefully withheld all promise to do so; but would he be proof against her coaxing and argument? She had calculated to such a degree on the probability of success that she had represented Paris, and not Budmouth, to her grandfather as in all likelihood their future home. Her hopes were bound up in this dream. In the quiet days since their marriage, when Yeobright had been poring over her lips, her eyes, and the lines of her face, she had mused and mused on the subject, even while in the act of returning his gaze; and now the sight of the books, indicating a future which was antagonistic to her dream, struck her with a positively painful jar. She was hoping for the time when, as the mistress of some pretty establishment, however small, in Paris, she would be passing her days on the skirts at least of the gay world, and catching stray wafts from those town pleasures she was so well fitted to enjoy. Yet Yeobright was as firm in the contrary intention as if the tendency of marriage were rather to develop the fantasies of young enthusiasm than to sweep them away.

Her anxiety reached a high pitch; but there was something in Clym's undeviating manner which made her hesitate before sounding him on the subject. At this point in their experience, however, an incident helped her. It occurred one evening about six weeks after their union, and arose entirely out of the unconscious misapplication by Venn of the fifty guineas intended for Yeobright.

A day or two after her receipt of the money, Thomasin had sent a note to her aunt to thank her. She had been surprised at the comparative largeness of the amount, but as no sum had ever been mentioned, she set that down to her late uncle's generosity. She had been strictly charged by her aunt to say nothing to her husband of this gift; and Wildeve, as was natural enough, had not brought himself to mention to his wife a single particular of the midnight scene on the heath. Christian's terror, in like manner, had tied his tongue on the share he took in that proceeding; and having learnt from Venn that the money had gone

to its proper destination, he simply asserted as much, without giving details.

Therefore, when a week or two had passed away, Mrs. Yeobright began to wonder why she never heard from her son of the receipt of the present; and to add gloom to her perplexity came the possibility that resentment might be the cause of his silence. She could hardly believe as much, but why did he not write? She questioned Christian, and the confusion in his answers would at once have led her to believe that something was wrong had not one half of his story been corroborated by Thomasin's note.

Mrs. Yeobright was in this state of uncertainty when she was informed one morning that her son's wife was visiting her grandfather at Mistover. She determined to walk up the hill, see Eustacia, and ascertain from her daughter-in-law's lips whether the family guineas, which were to Mrs. Yeobright what family jewels are to wealthier dowagers, had miscarried or not.

She started at two o'clock on this errand; and her plan of meeting Eustacia was hastened by the appearance of the young lady beside the pool and bank which bordered her grandfather's premises, where she stood surveying the scene, and perhaps thinking of the romantic enactments it had witnessed in past days. When Mrs. Yeobright approached, Eustacia surveyed her with the calm stare of a stranger.

The mother-in-law was the first to speak. 'I was coming to see you,' she said.

'Indeed!' said Eustacia, with surprise; for Mrs. Yeobright, much to the girl's mortification, had refused to be present at the wedding. 'I did not at all expect you.'

'I was coming on business only,' said the visitor more coldly than at first. 'If you or my son had acknowledged the receipt of the money, it would not have been necessary for me to come at all.'

Their conversation had had an untoward opening. Eustacia replied with off-handed softness: 'We have received nothing.'

'Are you sure that he has not?'

'I think it very unlikely that he can have done so without my knowing; his astonishment at receiving anything from one who would not do us the poor kindness of being present at our wedding would surely have led him to tell me.'

'There you mistake me,' said Mrs. Yeobright, coming a step nearer. 'Unkindness had nothing to do with my staying away. Kind actions are not so foreign to my nature as you would seem to believe. You ought to have better opinions of me.'

Eustacia was silent for a minute. 'You were against me from the first,' she murmured.

'No. I was simply for him,' replied Mrs. Yeobright, with too much emphasis in her earnestness. 'It is the instinct of everyone to look after their own.'

'How can you imply that he required guarding against me?' cried Eustacia, passionate tears in her eyes. 'I have not injured him by marrying him. What sin have I done that you should think so ill of me? You had no right to speak against me to him when I have never wronged you.'

'I only did what was fair under the circumstances,' said Mrs. Yeobright more softly. 'I would rather not have gone into this question at present, but you compel me. I am not ashamed to tell you the honest truth. I was firmly convinced that he ought not to marry you—therefore I tried to dissuade him by all the means in my power. But it is done now, and I have no idea of complaining any more. I am ready to welcome you.'

'Ah yes, it is very well to see things in that business point of view,' murmured Eustacia, a smothered fire of feeling being suggested by her bearing. 'But I have a spirit as well as you. I am indignant; and so would any woman be. It was a condescension in me to be his wife, and not a manoeuvre, let me remind you; and therefore I will not be treated as a schemer whom it becomes necessary to bear with because she has crept into the family.'

'Oh!' said Mrs. Yeobright, vainly endeavouring to control her anger. 'I have never heard anything to show that my son's lineage is not as good as the Vyes'—perhaps better. It is amusing to hear you talk of condescension.'

'It was condescension, nevertheless,' said Eustacia vehemently. 'And if I had known then what I know now, that I should be living in this wild heath a month after my marriage, I—I should have thought twice before agreeing!'

'It would be better not to say that; it might not sound truthful. I am not aware that any deception was used on his part—I know there was not—whatever might have been the case on the other side.'

'This is too exasperating,' answered the younger woman huskily, her face crimsoning, and her eyes darting light. 'How can you dare to speak to me like that! I insist upon repeating to you that, had I known that my life would from my marriage up to this time have been as it is, I should have said *No*. I don't complain. I have never uttered a sound of such a thing to him; but it is true. I hope therefore that in the future you will be silent on my eagerness. If you injure me now, you injure yourself.'

'Injure you? Do you think I am an evil-disposed person?'

'You injured me before my marriage.'

'I never spoke of you outside my house.'

'You spoke of me within it, to him, the chief of all.'

'I did my duty.'

'And I'll do mine.'

'A part of which will possibly be to set him against me. It is always so. But why should I not bear it as others have borne it before me!'

'I understand you,' said Eustacia, breathless with emotion. 'You think me capable of every bad thing. Who can be worse than a woman who poisons her husband's mind against his mother? Yet that is now the character given to me. Will you not come and drag him out of my hands?'

Mrs. Yeobright gave back heat for heat. 'Don't rage at me, Madam! It ill becomes your beauty, and I am not worth the injury you may do it on my account, I assure you. I am only a poor old woman who has lost a son.'

'If you had treated me honourably you would have had him still,' Eustacia said, while scalding tears trickled from her eyes. 'You have brought yourself to folly; you have caused a division which can never be healed!'

'I have done nothing. This audacity from a young woman is more than I can bear.'

'It was asked for—you have made me speak of my husband in a way I would not have done. You will let him know that I have spoken thus, and it will cause misery between us. Will you go away from me—you are no friend!'

'I will go when I have spoken a word. If anyone says that I attempted to stop your marriage by any but honest means, that person speaks untruly. I have fallen in an evil time; God has been unjust to me in letting you insult me. Probably my son's happiness does not lie on this side of the grave, for he is a foolish man who neglects the advice of his parent. You, Eustacia, stand on the edge of a precipice without knowing it. Only show my son one half the temper you have shown me to-day—and you may before long—and you will find that, though he is gentle as a child with you now, he can be as hard as steel!'

The excited mother then withdrew, and Eustacia, panting, stood looking into the pool.

CHAPTER II.

HE IS SET UPON BY ADVERSITIES; BUT HE SINGS A SONG.

THE result of that unpropitious interview was that Eustacia, instead of passing the afternoon with her grandfather, hastily

returned home to Clym, where she arrived three hours earlier than she had been expected.

She came indoors with her face flushed, and her eyes still showing traces of her recent excitement. Yeobright looked up astonished; he had never seen her in any way approaching to that state before. She passed him by and would have gone upstairs unnoticed, but Clym was so concerned that he immediately followed her.

‘What is the matter, Eustacia?’ he said. She was standing on the hearthrug in the bedroom, looking upon the floor, her hands clasped in front of her, her bonnet yet unremoved. For a moment she did not answer; and then she replied in a low voice, ‘I have seen your mother; and I will never see her again.’

A weight fell like a stone upon Clym. That same morning, when Eustacia had arranged to go and see her grandfather, Clym had expressed a wish that she would drive down to Blooms-End and inquire for her mother-in-law, or adopt any other means she might think fit to bring about a reconciliation. She had set out gaily; and he had hoped for much.

‘Why is this?’ he asked.

‘I cannot tell—I cannot remember. I met your mother. And I will never meet her again.’

‘Why?’

‘What do I know about her family affairs? I won’t have bitter opinions passed on me by anybody. Oh! it was too humiliating to be asked if we had received any money from her. That began the dispute, and then it went on to worse.’

‘How could she have asked you that?’

‘She did.’

‘Then there must have been some meaning in it. What did my mother say besides?’

‘I don’t know what she said, except in so far as this, that we both said words which can never be forgiven.’

‘Oh, there must be some misapprehension. Whose fault was it that her meaning was not made clear?’

‘I would rather not say. It may have been the fault of the circumstances, which were awkward at the very least. O Clym—I cannot help expressing it—this is an unpleasant position that you have placed me in! But you must improve it—yes, say you will—for I hate it all now. Yes, take me to Paris, and go on with your old occupation, Clym! I don’t mind how humbly we live there at first, if it can only be Paris, and not Egdon Heath.’

‘But I have quite given up that idea,’ said Yeobright, with surprise. ‘Surely I never led you to expect such a thing?’

‘I own it. Yet there are thoughts which cannot be kept out of mind, and that one was mine. Must I not have a voice in the matter, now I am your wife, and the sharer of your doom?’

‘Well, there are things which are placed beyond the pale of discussion; and I thought this was specially so, and by mutual agreement.’

‘Clym, I am unhappy at what I hear,’ she said in a low voice; and her eyes drooped, and she turned away.

This indication of an unexpected mine of hope in Eustacia’s bosom disconcerted her husband. It was the first time that he had confronted the fact of the indirectness of a woman’s movement towards her desire. But his intention was unshaken, though he loved Eustacia well. All the effect that her remark had upon him was a resolve to chain himself more closely than ever to his books, so as to be the sooner enabled to appeal to substantial results from another course in arguing against her whim.

Next day the mystery of the guineas was explained. Thomasin paid them a hurried visit, and Clym’s share was delivered up to him by her own hands. Eustacia was not present at the time.

‘Then this is what my mother meant,’ exclaimed Clym. ‘Thomasin, do you know that they have had a bitter quarrel?’

There was a little more reticence now than formerly in Thomasin’s manner towards her cousin. It is the effect of marriage to engender in several directions some of the reserve it annihilates in one. ‘Your mother told me,’ she said quietly. ‘She came back to my house.’

‘The worst thing I dreaded has come to pass. Was mother much disturbed when she came to you, Thomasin?’

‘Yes.’

‘Very much indeed?’

‘Yes.’

Clym leant his elbow upon the post of the garden-gate, and covered his eyes with his hand.

‘Don’t trouble about it, Clym. They may get to be friends.’

He shook his head. ‘Not two people with inflammable natures like theirs. Well, what must be will be.’

‘One thing is cheerful in it—the guineas are not lost.’

‘I would rather have lost them twice over than have had this happen.’

Amid these jarring events, Yeobright felt one thing to be indispensable—that he should speedily make some show of progress in his scholastic plans. With this view he read far into the small hours during many nights.

One morning, after a severer strain than usual, he awoke with a strange sensation in his eyes. The sun was shining directly upon the window-blind, and at his first glance thitherward a sharp pain obliged him to quickly close his eyelids. At every new attempt to look about him the same morbid sensibility to light was manifested, and excoriating tears ran down his cheeks. He was obliged to tie a bandage over his brow while dressing; and during the day it could not be abandoned. Eustacia was thoroughly alarmed. On finding that the case was no better the next morning they decided to send to Southerton for a surgeon.

Towards evening he arrived, and pronounced the disease to be acute inflammation, induced by Clym's night studies, continued in spite of a cold previously caught, which had weakened his eyes for the time.

Fretting with impatience at this interruption to a task he was so anxious to hasten, Clym was transformed into an invalid. He was shut up in a room from which all light was excluded, and his condition would have been one of absolute misery had not Eustacia read to him by the glimmer of a shaded lamp. He hoped that the worst would soon be over; but at the surgeon's third visit he learnt, to his dismay, that, although he might venture out of doors with shaded eyes in the course of a month, all thought of pursuing his work, or of reading print of any description, would have to be given up for a long time to come.

One week and another week wore on, and nothing seemed to lighten the gloom of the young couple. Dreadful imaginings occurred to Eustacia, but she carefully refrained from uttering them to her husband. Suppose he should become blind, or, at all events, never recover sufficient strength of sight to engage in an occupation which would be congenial to her feelings, and conduce to her removal from this lonely dwelling among the hills? That dream of beautiful Paris was not likely to cohere into substance in the presence of this misfortune. As day after day passed by, and he got no better, her mind ran more and more in this mournful groove, and she would go away from him into the garden, and weep despairing tears.

Yeobright thought he would send for his mother; and then he thought he would not. Knowledge of his state could only make her the more unhappy; and the seclusion of their life was such that she would hardly be likely to learn the news except through a special messenger. Endeavouring to take the trouble as philosophically as possible, he waited on till the fourth week had arrived; when he went into the open air for the first time since the attack. The surgeon visited him again at this stage, and Clym pressed

him to express a distinct opinion. The young man learnt with added surprise that the date at which he might expect to resume his labours was as uncertain as ever, his eyes being in that peculiar state which, though affording him sight enough for walking about, would not admit of their being strained upon any definite object without incurring the risk of reproducing ophthalmia in its acute form.

Clym was very grave at the intelligence, but not despairing. A quiet firmness, and even cheerfulness, took possession of him. He was not to be blind; that was enough. To be doomed to behold the world through smoked glass for an indefinite period was bad enough, and fatal to any kind of advance; but Yeobright was an absolute stoic in the face of mishaps which only affected his social standing; and, apart from Eustacia, the humblest walk of life would satisfy him if it could be made to work in with some form of his culture scheme. To keep a cottage night-school was one such form; and his affliction did not master his spirit as it might otherwise have done.

He walked through the warm sun westward, into those tracts of Egdon with which he was best acquainted, being those lying nearer to his old home. He saw before him in one of the valleys the gleaming of whetted iron, and advancing, dimly perceived that the shine came from the tool of a man who was cutting furze. The worker recognised Clym, and Yeobright learnt from the voice that the speaker was Humphrey.

Humphrey expressed his sorrow at Clym's condition; and added, 'Now, if yours was low-class work like mine, you could go on with it just the same.'

'Yes, I could,' said Yeobright musingly. 'How much do you get for cutting these faggots?'

'Half-a-crown a hundred, and in these long days I can live very well on the wages.'

During the whole of Yeobright's walk home to Alderworth he was lost in reflections which were not of an unpleasant kind. On his coming up to the house Eustacia spoke to him from the open window, and he went across to her.

'Darling,' he said, 'I am much happier. And if my mother were reconciled to me and to you I should, I think, be happy quite.'

'I fear that will never be,' she said, looking afar with her beautiful stormy eyes. 'How can you say "I am happier," and nothing changed?'

'It arises from my having at last discovered something I can do, and get a living at, in this time of misfortune.'

‘Yes?’

‘I am going to be a furze-cutter.’

‘No, Clym!’ she said, the slight hopefulness apparent in her face going off again, and leaving her worse than before.

‘Surely I shall. Is it not very unwise in us to go on spending the little money we’ve got when I can keep down expenditure by an honest occupation? The out-door exercise will do me good, and who knows but that in a few months I shall be able to go on with my reading again?’

‘But my grandfather offers to assist us, if we require assistance.’

‘We don’t require it. If I go furze-cutting we shall be fairly well off.’

‘In comparison with slaves, and the Israelites in Egypt, and such people!’ A bitter tear rolled down Eustacia’s face, which he did not see. There had been nonchalance in his tone, showing her that he felt no absolute grief at a consummation which to her was a positive horror.

The very next day Yeobright went to Humphrey’s cottage, and borrowed of him leggings, gloves, a whetstone, and a hook, to use till he should be able to purchase some for himself. Then he sallied forth with his new fellow-labourer and old acquaintance, and selecting a spot where the furze grew thickest he struck the first blow in his adopted calling. His sight, like the wings in *Rasselas*, though useless to him for his grand purpose, sufficed well enough for this; and he found that, after a little practice should have hardened his palms against blistering, he would be able to work with ease.

Day after day he rose with the sun, buckled on his leggings, and went off to the rendezvous with Humphrey. His custom was to work from four o’clock in the morning till noon; then, when the heat of the day was at its highest, to go home and sleep for an hour or two; afterwards coming out again and working till dusk at nine.

This man from Paris was now so disguised by his leather accoutrements, and by the goggles he was obliged to wear over his eyes, that his closest friend might have passed by without recognising him. He was a brown spot in the midst of an expanse of olive-green gorse, and nothing more. Though frequently depressed in spirit when not actually at work, owing to thoughts of Eustacia’s position and his mother’s estrangement, when in the full swing of labour he was cheerfully disposed and calm.

His daily life was of a curious microscopic sort, his whole world being limited to a circuit of a few feet from his person. Bees

hummed around his ears, and tugged at the heath and furze-flowers, weighing them down to the sod. The strange amber-coloured butterflies which Egdon produced, and which were never seen elsewhere, quivered in the sunny air, alighted upon his bowed back, and sported with the glittering point of his hook as he flourished it up and down. Tribes of emerald-green grasshoppers leaped over his feet, falling awkwardly on their backs, heads, or hips, like unskilful acrobats, as chance might rule; or engaged themselves in noisy flirtations under the fern-fronds with silent ones of homely hue. Huge flies, ignorant of ladders and wire-netting, and quite in a savage state, buzzed about him without knowing that he was a man. In and out of the fern-brakes, snakes glided in their most brilliant blue and yellow guise, it being the season immediately following the shedding of their old skins, when their colours are brightest. Litters of young rabbits came out from their forms to sun themselves upon hillocks, where the sunbeams blazed through the delicate tissue of their thin-fleshed ears, firing them to a blood-red transparency in which each vein could be seen.

The monotony of his occupation soothed him, and was in itself a pleasure. A forced limitation of effort offered a justification of homely courses to an unambitious man, whose conscience would hardly have allowed him to remain in obscurity while his powers were unimpeded. Hence Yeobright sometimes sang to himself; and, when obliged to accompany Humphrey in search of long brambles for faggot-bonds, he would amuse his companion with sketches of Parisian life and character, and so while away the time.

On one of these warm afternoons Eustacia walked out alone in the direction of Yeobright's place of work. He was busily chopping away at the furze, a long row of faggots which stretched downward from his position representing the labour of the day. He did not observe her approach, and she stood close to him, and heard his undercurrent of song. It shocked her. To see him there, a poor afflicted man, earning money by the sweat of his brow, had at first moved her to tears; but to hear him sing and not at all rebel against an occupation which, however satisfactory to himself, was degrading to her as an educated lady-wife, wounded her through. Unconscious of her presence, he still went on singing:—

Le point du jour
À nos bosquets rend toute leur parure;
Flore est plus belle à son retour;
L'oiseau reprend doux chant d'amour:
Tout célèbre dans la nature
Le point du jour.

Le point du jour
 Cause parfois, cause douleur extrême,
 Que l'espace des nuits est court
 Pour le berger brûlant d'amour,
 Forcé de quitter ce qu'il aime
 Au point du jour.

It was bitterly plain to Eustacia that he did not care much about social failure; and the proud fair woman bowed her head and wept in sick despair at thought of the blasting effect upon her own life of that mood and condition in him. Then she came forward.

'I would starve rather than do it!' she exclaimed vehemently. 'And you can sing! I will go and live with my grandfather again.'

'Eustacia! I did not see you, though I noticed something moving,' he said gently. He came forward, pulled off his huge leather glove, and took her hand. 'Why do you speak in such a strange way? It is only a little song which struck my fancy when I was in Paris, and now just applies to my life with you. Has your love for me all died, then, because my appearance is no longer that of a fine gentleman?'

'Dearest, you must not question me unpleasantly, or it may make me not love you.'

'Do you believe it possible that I would run the risk of doing that?'

'Well, you follow out your own ideas, and won't give in to mine when I wish you to leave off this shameful labour. Is there anything you dislike in me, that you act so contrarily to my wishes? I am your wife, and why will you not listen? Yes, I am your wife, indeed!'

'I know what that tone means.'

'What tone?'

'The tone in which you said, "Your wife, indeed!" It meant, "Your wife, worse luck!"'

'It is hard in you to probe me with that remark. A woman may have reason, though she is not without heart; and if I felt "worse luck," it was no ignoble feeling—it was only too natural. There! you see that at any rate I do not attempt untruths. Do you remember how, before we were married, I warned you that I had not good wifely qualities?'

'You mock me to say that now. On that point at least the only noble course would be to hold your tongue, for you are still queen of me, Eustacia, though I may no longer be king of you.'

'You are my husband. Does not that content you?'

'Not unless you are my wife without regret.'

'I cannot answer you. I remember saying that I should be a serious matter on your hands.'

‘Yes, I saw that.’

‘Then you were too quick to see! No true lover would have seen any such thing; you are too severe upon me, Clym—I don’t like your speaking so at all.’

‘Well, I married you in spite of it, and don’t regret doing so. How cold you seem this afternoon! and yet I used to think there never was a warmer heart than yours.’

‘Yes, I fear we are cooling—I see it as well as you. And how madly we loved two months ago! You were never tired of contemplating me, nor I of contemplating you. Who could have thought then, that by this time my eyes would not seem so very bright to yours, nor your lips so very sweet to mine? Two months—is it possible? Yes, ’tis too true.’

‘You sigh, dear, as if you were sorry for it; and that’s a hopeful sign.’

‘No; I don’t sigh for that. There are other things for me to sigh for, or any other woman in my place.’

‘That your chances in life are ruined, by marrying in haste an unfortunate man?’

‘Why will you force me, Clym, to say bitter things? I deserve pity as much as you. As much?—I think I deserve more. For you can sing. It would be a strange hour which should catch me singing under such a cloud as this! Believe me, sweet, I could weep to a degree that would astonish and confound such an elastic mind as yours. Even had you felt careless about your own affliction, you might have refrained from singing out of sheer pity for mine. God! if I were a man in such a position, I would curse rather than sing.’

Yeobright placed his hand upon her arm. ‘Now, don’t you suppose, my inexperienced girl, that I cannot rebel, in high Promethean fashion, against the gods and fate as well as you. I have felt more steam and smoke of that sort than you have ever heard of. But the more I see of life, the more do I perceive that there is nothing particularly great in its greatest walks, and therefore nothing particularly small in mine of furze-cutting. If I feel that the greatest blessings vouchsafed to us are not very valuable, how can I feel it to be any great hardship when they are taken away? So I sing to pass the time. Have you indeed lost all tenderness for me, that you begrudge me a few cheerful moments?’

‘I have still some tenderness left for you.’

‘Your words have no longer their old flavour. And so love dies with good fortune.’

‘I cannot listen to this, Clym—it will end bitterly. I will go home.’

CHAPTER III.

SHE GOES OUT TO BATTLE AGAINST DEPRESSION.

A FEW days later, before the month of August had expired, Eustacia and Yeobright sat together at their early dinner.

Eustacia's manner had become of late almost apathetic. There was a forlorn look about her beautiful eyes which, whether she deserved it or not, would have excited pity in the breast of anyone who had known her during the full flush of her love for Clym. The feelings of husband and wife varied, in some measure, inversely with their positions. Clym, the afflicted man, was cheerful, and even tried to comfort her, who had never felt a moment of physical suffering in her whole life.

'Come, brighten up, dearest; we shall be all right again. Some day perhaps I shall see as well as ever. And I solemnly promise that I'll leave off cutting furze as soon as I have the power to do anything better. You cannot seriously wish me to stay idling at home all day?'

'But it is so dreadful—a furze-cutter; and you a man who have lived about the world, and speak French, and who are fit for what is so much better than this.'

'I suppose when you first saw me and heard about me, I was wrapped in a sort of golden halo to your eyes—a man who knew glorious things, and had mixed in brilliant scenes—in short, an adorable, delightful, distracting hero!'

'Yes,' she said, sobbing.

'And now I am a poor fellow in brown leather.'

'Don't taunt me.—But enough of this. I will not be depressed any more. I am going from home this afternoon, unless you greatly object. There is to be a village picnic—a gipsying, they call it—at East Egdon, and I shall go.'

'To dance?'

'Why not? You can sing.'

'Well, well, as you will. Must I come to fetch you?'

'If you return soon enough from your work. But do not inconvenience yourself about it. I know the way home, and the heath has no terror for me.'

'And can you cling to gaiety so eagerly as to walk all the way to a village festival in search of it?'

'Now, you don't like my going alone. Clym, you are not jealous?'

'No. But I would come with you if it could give you any pleasure; though, as things stand, perhaps you have too much of

me already. Still, I somehow wish that you did not want to go. Yes, perhaps I am jealous; and who could be jealous with more reason than I, a half-blind man, over such a woman as you?'

'Don't think like it. Let me go, and don't take all my spirits away.'

'I would rather lose all my own, my sweet wife. Go and do whatever you like. Who can forbid your indulgence in any whim! You have all my heart yet, I believe; and because you bear with me, who am in truth a drag upon you, I owe you thanks. Yes, go alone and shine. As for me, I will stick to my doom. At that kind of meeting people would shun me. My hook and gloves are like the St. Lazarus rattle of the leper, warning the world to get out of the way of a sight that would sadden them.' He kissed her, put on his leggings, and went out.

When he was gone she rested her head upon her hands and said to herself, 'Two wasted lives—his and mine. And I am come to this! Will it drive me out of my mind?'

She cast about for any possible course which offered the least improvement on the existing state of things, and could find none. She imagined how all those Budmouth ones who should learn what had become of her would say, 'Look at the girl for whom nobody was good enough!' To Eustacia the situation seemed such a mockery of her hopes, that death appeared the only door of relief if the satire of heaven should go much further.

Suddenly she aroused herself and exclaimed, 'But I'll shake it off. Yes, I *will* shake it off! No one shall know my suffering. I'll be bitterly merry, and ironically gay, and I'll laugh in derision! And I'll begin by going to this dance on the green.'

She ascended to her bedroom and dressed herself with scrupulous care. To an onlooker her beauty would have made her feelings almost seem reasonable. The gloomy corner into which accident as much as indiscretion had brought this woman, might have led even a moderate champion of her cause to feel that she could advance a cogent reason for asking of the Supreme Power by what right a being of such exquisite finish had been juxtaposed with circumstances calculated to make of her charms a curse rather than a blessing.

It was five in the afternoon when she came out from the house ready for her walk. There was material enough in the picture for twenty new conquests. The rebellious sadness that was rather too apparent when she sat indoors without a bonnet, was cloaked and softened by her outdoor attire, which always exhibited a peculiar nebulosity, devoid of harsh edges anywhere, so that her face

looked from its environment as from a cloud, with no noticeable lines of demarcation between flesh and clothes. The heat of the day had scarcely declined as yet, and she went along the sunny hills at a leisurely pace, there being ample time for her idle expedition. Tall ferns buried her in their leafage whenever her path lay through them, which now formed miniature forests, though not one stem of them would remain to bud the next year.

The site chosen for the village festivity was one of the lawn-like oases which were occasionally, yet not often, met with on the plateaus of the heath district. The brakes of furze and fern terminated abruptly round the margin, and the grass was unbroken. A green cattle-track skirted the spot, without however emerging from the screen of fern, and this path Eustacia followed, in order to reconnoitre the group before joining it. The lusty notes of the East Egdon band had directed her unerringly, and she now beheld the musicians themselves, sitting in a blue waggon with red wheels, scrubbed as bright as new, and arched with sticks to which boughs and flowers were tied. In front of this was the grand central dance of fifteen or twenty couples, flanked by minor dances of inferior individuals whose gyrations were not always in strict keeping with the tune.

The young men wore blue and white rosettes, and with a flush on their faces footed it to the girls, who, with the excitement and the exercise, blushed deeper than the pink of their numerous ribbons. Belles with long curls, belles with short curls, belles with love-locks, belles with braids, flew round and round; and a beholder might well have wondered how such a prepossessing set of young women, of like size, age, and disposition, could have been collected together where there were only one or two villages to choose from. In the background was one happy man dancing by himself with closed eyes, totally oblivious of all the rest. A fire was burning under a pollard thorn a few paces off, over which three kettles hung in a row. Hard by was a table where elderly dames prepared tea, but Eustacia looked among them in vain for the cattle-dealer's wife, who had suggested that she should come, and promised to obtain a courteous welcome for her.

This unexpected absence of the only local resident whom Eustacia knew, considerably damaged her scheme for an afternoon of reckless gaiety. Joining in became a matter of difficulty, notwithstanding that, were she to advance, cheerful females would come forward with cups of tea, and make much of her as a stranger of superior grace and knowledge to themselves. Having watched the company through the figures of two dances, she decided to walk a little farther, to a cottage where she might get

some refreshment, and then return homeward in the shady time of evening.

This she did; and by the time that she retraced her steps towards the scene of the picnic, which it was necessary to re-pass on her way to Alderworth, the sun was going down. The air was now so still that she could hear the band immediately she had set out again, and it seemed to be playing with more spirit, if that were possible, than when she had come away. On reaching the hill the sun had quite disappeared, but this made little difference either to Eustacia or to the revellers, for a round yellow moon was rising behind her, though its rays had not yet outmastered those from the west. The dance was going on just the same, but strangers had arrived and formed a ring around the figure, so that Eustacia could stand among these without a chance of being recognised.

A whole village-full of emotion, scattered abroad all the year long, met here in a focus for an hour. The forty hearts of those waving couples were beating as they had not done since, twelve months before, they had come together in similar jollity. For the time Christianity was eclipsed in their hearts, Paganism was revived, the pride of life was all in all, and they adored none other than themselves.

How many of those impassioned but temporary embraces were destined to become perpetuated, was possibly the wonder of some of those who indulged in them as well as of Eustacia who looked on. She began to envy those pirouetters, to hunger for the hope and happiness which the fascination of the dance seemed to engender within them. Desperately fond of dancing herself, one of Eustacia's expectations of Paris had been the opportunity it might afford her of indulging in this favourite pastime. Unhappily, that expectation was now extinct within her for ever.

Whilst she abstractedly watched them spinning and fluctuating in the increasing moonlight, she suddenly heard her name whispered by a voice over her shoulder. Turning in surprise, she beheld at her elbow one whose presence instantly caused her to flush to the temples.

It was Wildevé. Till this moment he had not met her eye since the evening of her reluctant promise to meet him again and decide the question of an elopement to America—a promise which for good reasons was never kept. Yet why the sight of him should have instigated that sudden rush of blood she could not tell.

Before she could speak, he said, 'Do you like dancing as much as ever?'

'I think I do,' she replied in a low voice.

'Will you dance with me?'

'It would be a great change for me; but will it not seem strange?'

'What strangeness can there be in relations dancing together?'

'Ah—yes, relations. Perhaps none.'

'Still, if you don't like to be seen, pull down your veil; though there is not much risk of being known by this light. Lots of strangers are here.'

She did as he suggested; and the act was a tacit acknowledgment that she accepted his offer.

Wildevé gave her his arm and took her down on the outside of the ring to the bottom of the dance, which they entered. In two minutes more they were involved in the figure and began working their way upwards to the top. Till they had advanced half way thither, Eustacia wished more than once that she had not yielded to his request; from the middle to the top, she felt that, since she had come out to seek pleasure, she was only doing a natural thing to obtain it. Fairly launched into the ceaseless glides and whirls which their new position as top couple opened up to them, Eustacia's pulses began to move too quickly for longer rumination of any kind.

Through the length of five-and-twenty couples they threaded their giddy way, and a new vitality entered her form. The pale ray of evening lent a fascination to the experience. There is a certain degree and tone of light which tends to disturb the equilibrium of the senses, and to promote dangerously the tenderer moods; added to movement, it drives the emotions to rankness, the reason becoming sleepy and unperceiving in inverse proportion; and this light fell now upon these two from the disc of the moon. All the dancing girls felt the symptoms; but Eustacia most of all. The grass under their feet became trodden away, and the hard beaten surface of the sod, when viewed aslant towards the moonlight, shone like a polished table. The pretty dresses of the maids lost their subtler day colours, and showed more or less of a misty white. Eustacia floated round and round on Wildevé's arm, her face rapt and statuesque; her mind had passed away from and forgotten her features, which were left empty and quiescent, as they always are when feeling goes beyond their register.

How near she was to Wildevé! it was terrible to think of. She could feel his breathing, and he, of course, could feel hers. How badly she had treated him! yet, here they were treading one measure. The enchantment of the dance surprised her. A clear

line of difference divided like a tangible *cordon* experience within this maze of motion from experience without it. Her beginning to dance had been like a change of atmosphere; outside, she had been steeped in arctic fridity by comparison with the tropical sensations here. She had entered the dance from the troubled hours of her late life, as one might enter a brilliant chamber after a night walk in a wood. Wildeve by himself would have been merely an agitation; Wildeve added to the dance, and the moonlight, and the secrecy, began to be a delight.

Whether his personality supplied the greater part of this sweetly compounded feeling, or whether the dance and the scene weighed the more therein, was a nice point upon which Eustacia herself was entirely in a cloud.

People began to say, 'Who are they?' but no invidious inquiries were made. Had Eustacia mingled with the other girls in their ordinary daily walks the case would have been different: here she was not inconvenienced by excessive inspection, for all were wrought to their brightest grace by the occasion. Like the planet Mercury surrounded by the lustre of sunset, her permanent brilliancy passed without much notice in the temporary radiance of the situation.

As for Wildeve, his feelings are easy to guess. Obstacles were a ripening sun to his love, and he was at this moment in a delirium of exquisite misery. To clasp as his for five minutes what was another man's through all the rest of the year was a kind of thing he of all men could appreciate. He had long since begun to sigh again for Eustacia; indeed, it may be asserted that signing the marriage register with Thomasin was the natural signal to his heart to return to its first quarters, and that the extra complication of Eustacia's marriage was the one addition required to make that return compulsory.

Thus, for different reasons, what was to the rest an exhilarating movement was to these two a riding upon the whirlwind. The dance had come like an irresistible attack upon whatever sense of social order there was in their minds, to drive them back into old paths which were now no longer regular.

Through three dances in succession they spun their way, and then, fatigued with the incessant motion, Eustacia turned to quit the circle in which she had already remained too long. Wildeve led her to a grassy mound a few yards distant, where she sat down, her partner standing beside her. From the time that he addressed her at the beginning of the dance till now they had not exchanged a word.

'The dance and the walking have tired you?' he said.

‘No: not greatly.’

‘It is strange that we should have met here of all places, after missing each other so long.’

‘We have missed because we tried to miss, I suppose.’

‘Yes. But you began that proceeding—by breaking a promise.’

‘It is scarcely worth while to talk of that now. We have formed other ties since then—you no less than I.’

‘I am sorry to hear that your husband is ill.’

‘He is not ill—only incapacitated.’

‘Yes: that is what I mean. I sincerely sympathise with you in your trouble. Fate has treated you cruelly.’

She was silent awhile. ‘Have you heard that he has chosen to work as a furze-cutter?’ she said, in a low mournful voice.

‘It has been mentioned to me,’ answered Wildeve hesitatingly. ‘But I hardly believed it.’

‘It is true. What do you think of me as a furze-cutter’s wife?’

‘I think the same as ever of you, Eustacia. Nothing of that sort can degrade you: you ennoble the occupation of your husband.’

‘I wish I could feel it.’

‘Is there any chance of Mr. Yeobright getting better?’

‘He thinks so. I doubt it.’

‘I was quite surprised to hear that he had taken a cottage. I thought, in common with other people, that he would have taken you off to a home in Paris immediately after you had married him. “What a gay, bright future she has before her!” I thought. He will, I suppose, return there with you if his sight gets strong again?’

Observing that she did not reply, he regarded her more closely. She was almost weeping. Images of a future never to be enjoyed, the revived sense of her bitter disappointment, the picture of the neighbours’ suspended ridicule which was raised by Wildeve’s words, had been too much for proud Eustacia’s equanimity.

Wildeve could hardly control his own too forward feelings when he saw her silent perturbation. But he affected not to notice this, and she soon recovered her calmness.

‘You did not intend to walk home by yourself?’ he asked.

‘O yes,’ said Eustacia. ‘What could hurt me on this heath, who have nothing to lose?’

‘The first half of my way home is the same as yours. I shall be glad to keep you company as far as Throope Corner.’ Seeing that Eustacia sat on in hesitation, he added, ‘Perhaps you think

it unwise to be seen in the same road with me after the events of last summer?’

‘Indeed I think no such thing,’ she said haughtily. ‘I shall accept whose company I choose for all that may be said by the miserable inhabitants of Egdon.’

‘Then let us walk on—if you are ready. Our nearest way is towards that holly bush with the dark shadow that you see down there.’

Eustacia arose, and walked beside him in the direction signified, brushing her way over the damping heath and fern, and followed by the strains of the merry-makers, who still kept up the dance. The moon had now waxed bright and silvery, but the swarthy heath was proof against such illumination, and there was to be observed the striking scene of a dark, rayless tract of country, under an atmosphere charged from its zenith to its extremities with whitest light. To an eye above them their two faces would have appeared amid the expanse like two pearls on a table of ebony.

On this account the irregularities of the path were not visible, and Wildeve occasionally stumbled; whilst Eustacia found it necessary to perform some graceful feats of balancing whenever a small tuft of heather or root of furze protruded itself through the grass of the narrow track, and entangled her feet. At these junctures in her progress a hand was invariably stretched forward to steady her, holding her firmly until smooth ground was again reached, when the hand was again withdrawn to a respectful distance.

They performed the journey for the most part in silence, and drew near to Throope Corner, a few hundred yards from which a short path branched away to Eustacia’s house. By degrees they discerned coming towards them a pair of human figures, apparently of the male sex.

When they came a little nearer Eustacia broke the silence by saying, ‘One of those men is my husband. He promised to come to meet me.’

‘And the other is my greatest enemy,’ said Wildeve.

‘It looks like Diggory Venn.’

‘That is the man.’

‘It is an awkward meeting; but such is my fortune. He knows too much about me, unless he could know more, and so prove to himself that what he now knows counts for nothing. Well, let it be: you must deliver me up to them.’

‘You will think twice before you direct me to do that. Here is a man who has not forgotten an item in our meetings at Black-

barrow: he is in company with your husband. Which of them, seeing us together here, will believe that our meeting and dancing at the gipsy-party was by chance?’

‘Very well,’ she whispered gloomily. ‘Leave me before they come up.’

Wildeve bade her an earnest farewell, and plunged across the fern and furze, Eustacia slowly walking on. In two or three minutes she met her husband and his companion.

‘My journey ends here for to-night, reddleman,’ said Yeobright as soon as he perceived her. ‘I turn back with this lady. Good-night.’

‘Good-night, Mr. Yeobright,’ said Venn. ‘I hope to see you better soon.’

The light shone directly upon Venn’s face as he spoke, and revealed all its lines to Eustacia. He was looking suspiciously at her. That Venn’s keen eye had discerned what Yeobright’s feeble vision had not—a man in the act of withdrawing from Eustacia’s side—was within the limits of the probable.

Had Eustacia been able to follow the reddleman she would soon have found striking confirmation of her thought. No sooner had Clym given her his arm and led her off the scene than the reddleman turned back from the beaten track towards East Egdon, whither he had been strolling merely to accompany Clym in his walk, Diggory’s van being again in the neighbourhood. Stretching out his long legs, he crossed the pathless portion of the heath somewhat in the direction which Wildeve had taken. Only a man accustomed to nocturnal rambles could at this hour have descended those shaggy slopes with Venn’s velocity without falling headlong into a pit, or snapping off his leg by jamming his foot into some rabbit burrow. But Venn went on without much inconvenience to himself, and the course of his scamper was towards the Quiet Woman Inn. This place he reached in about half an hour, and he was well aware that no person who had been near Throope Corner when he started could have got down here before him.

The inn was not yet closed, though scarcely an individual was there, the business done being chiefly with travellers who passed the inn on long journeys, and these had now gone on their way. Venn went to the public room, called for a mug of ale, and inquired of the maid in an indifferent tone if Mr. Wildeve was at home.

Thomasin sat in an inner room, and heard Venn’s voice. When customers were present she seldom showed herself, owing to her inherent dislike for the business; but perceiving that no one else was there to-night, she came out.

‘He is not at home yet, Diggory,’ she said pleasantly. ‘But I expected him sooner. He has been to East Egdon to buy a horse.’

‘Did he wear a white hat?’

‘Yes.’

‘Then I saw him at Throope Corner, leading one home,’ said Venn drily. ‘A beauty, with a white face and a mane as black as night. He will soon be here, no doubt.’ Rising and looking for a moment at the pure sweet face of Thomasin, over which a shadow of sadness had passed since the time when he had last seen her, he ventured to add, ‘Mr. Wildeve seems to be often away at this time?’

‘O yes,’ cried Thomasin in what was intended to be a tone of gaiety. ‘Husbands will play the truant, you know. I wish you could tell me of some secret plan that would help me to keep him home at my will in the evenings.’

‘I will consider if I know of one,’ replied Venn in that same light tone which meant no lightness. And then he bowed in a manner of his own invention, and moved to go. Thomasin offered him her hand; and without a sigh, though with food for many, the reddleman went out.

When Wildeve returned a quarter of an hour later Thomasin said simply, and in the abashed manner usual with her now, ‘Where is the horse, Damon?’

‘Oh, I have not bought it after all. The man asks too much.’

‘But somebody saw you at Throope Corner leading it home—a beauty, with a white face and a mane as black as night.’

‘Ah!’ said Wildeve, fixing his eyes upon her; ‘who told you that?’

‘Venn the reddleman.’

The expression of Wildeve’s face became curiously condensed. ‘That is a mistake—it must have been some one else,’ he said slowly and testily, for he perceived that Venn’s grim countermoves had begun again.

CHAPTER IV.

ROUGH COERCION IS EMPLOYED.

THOSE words of Thomasin, which seemed so little, but meant so much, remained in the ears of Diggory Venn. ‘Help me to keep him home in the evenings.’

On this occasion Venn had arrived on Egdon Heath only to

cross to the other side: he had no further connection with the interests of the Yeobright family, and he had a business of his own to attend to. Yet he suddenly began to feel himself drifting into the old track of manœuvring on Thomasin's account.

He sat in his van and considered. From Thomasin's words and manner he had plainly gathered that Wildeve neglected her. For whom could he neglect her if not for Eustacia? Yet it was scarcely credible that things had come to such a head as to instigate Eustacia to systematically encourage him. He resolved to reconnoitre somewhat carefully the lonely path which led across the hills from Wildeve's dwelling to Clym's house at Alderworth.

At this time, as has been seen, Wildeve was quite innocent of any predetermined act of intrigue, and except at the dance on the green he had not once met Eustacia since her marriage. But that the spirit of intrigue was in him had been shown by a recent romantic habit of his; a habit of going out after dark and strolling towards Alderworth, there looking at the moon and stars, looking at Eustacia's house, and walking back at leisure.

Accordingly, when watching on the night after the festival, the reddleman saw him ascend by the little path, lean over the front gate of Clym's garden, sigh, and turn to go back again. It was plain that Wildeve's intrigue was rather ideal than real. Venn retreated before him down the hill to a place where the path was merely a deep groove between the heather; here he mysteriously bent over the ground for a few minutes, and retired. When Wildeve came on to that spot his ankle was caught by something, and he fell headlong.

As soon as he had recovered the power of respiration he sat up and listened. There was not a sound in the gloom beyond the spiritless stir of the summer wind. Feeling about for the obstacle which had flung him down, he discovered that two tufts of heath had been tied together across the path, forming a loop which to a traveller was certain overthrow. Wildeve pulled off the string that bound them, and went on with tolerable quickness. On reaching home he found the cord to be of a reddish colour. It was just what he had expected.

Although his weaknesses were not specially those akin to physical fear, this species of *coup-de-Jarnac* from one he knew too well troubled the mind of Wildeve. But his movements were unaltered thereby. A night or two later he again went up the hill to Alderworth, taking the precaution of keeping out of the path. The sense that he was watched, that craft was employed to circumvent his errant proclivities, added piquancy to a journey so entirely sentimental, so long as the danger was of no fearful sort. He

imagined that Venn and Mrs. Yeobright were in league, and felt that there was a certain legitimacy in combating such a coalition.

The heath to-night appeared to be totally deserted; and Wildeve, after looking over Eustacia's garden-gate for some little time with a cigar in his mouth, was tempted by the fascination which emotional smuggling had for his nature to advance towards the window, which was not quite closed, the blind being only partly drawn down. He could see into the room, and Eustacia was sitting there alone. Wildeve contemplated her for a minute, and then retreating into the heath beat the ferns lightly, whereupon moths flew out alarmed. Securing one, he returned to the window, and, holding the moth to the chink, opened his hand. The moth made towards the candle upon Eustacia's table, hovered round it two or three times, and flew into the flame.

Eustacia started up. This had been a well-known signal in old times when Wildeve had used to come secretly wooing to Mistover. She at once knew that Wildeve was outside, but before she could consider what to do her husband came in from upstairs. Eustacia's face burnt crimson at the unexpected collision of incidents, and filled with an animation that it too frequently lacked.

'You have a very high colour, dearest,' said Yeobright when he came close enough to see it. 'Your appearance would be no worse if it were always so.'

'I am warm,' said Eustacia. 'I think I will go into the air for a few minutes.'

'Shall I go with you?'

'Oh no. I am only going to the gate.'

She arose, but before she had time to get out of the room a loud rapping began upon the front door.

'I'll go—I'll go,' said Eustacia in an unusually quick tone for her; and she glanced towards the window whence the moth had flown, but nothing appeared there.

'You had better not at this time of the evening.' Clym stepped before her into the passage, and Eustacia waited, her somnolent manner covering her inner heat and agitation.

She listened, and Clym opened the door. No words were uttered outside, and presently he closed it and came back, saying, 'Nobody was there—I wonder what that could have meant.'

He was left to wonder during the rest of the evening, for no explanation offered itself, and Eustacia said nothing, the additional fact that she knew of only adding more mystery to the performance.

Meanwhile a little drama had been acted outside, which saved Eustacia from all possibility of compromising herself with Wildeve that evening at least. Whilst he had been preparing his moth-signal another person had come behind him up to the gate. This man, who carried a gun in his hand, looked on for a moment at the other's operation by the window, walked up to the house, knocked at the door, and then vanished round the corner and over the hedge.

'Damn him!' said Wildeve. 'He has been watching me again.'

As his signal had been rendered futile by this uproarious rapping, Wildeve withdrew, passed out at the gate, and walked quickly down the path without thinking of anything except getting away unnoticed. Halfway down the hill the path ran near a knot of stunted hollies, which in the general darkness of the scene stood as the pupil in a black eye. When Wildeve reached this point a report startled his ear, and a few spent gunshots fell among the leaves around him.

There was no doubt that he himself was the cause of that gun's discharge; and he rushed into the clump of hollies, beating the bushes furiously with his stick; but nobody was there. This attack was a more serious matter than the last, and it was some time before Wildeve recovered his equanimity. A new and most unpleasant system of menace had begun, and the intent appeared to be to do him grievous bodily harm. Wildeve had looked upon Venn's first attempt as a species of horse-play, which the reddleman had indulged in for want of knowing better; but now the boundary line was passed which divides the annoying from the perilous.

Had Wildeve known how thoroughly in earnest Venn had become, he might have been still more alarmed. The reddleman had been almost exasperated by the sight of Wildeve outside Clym's house, and he was prepared to go to any lengths short of absolutely shooting him, to terrify the young innkeeper out of his recalcitrant impulses. The doubtful legitimacy of such rough coercion did not disturb the mind of Venn. It troubles few such minds in such cases, and sometimes this is not to be regretted. From the impeachment of Strafford to Farmer Lynch's short way with the scamps of Virginia there have been many triumphs of justice which are mockeries of law.

About half a mile below Clym's secluded dwelling lay a hamlet where lived one of the two constables who preserved the peace in the parish of Alderworth, and Wildeve went straight to the constable's cottage. Almost the first thing that he saw on opening

the door was the constable's truncheon hanging to a nail, as if to assure him that here were the means to his purpose. On inquiry, however, of the constable's wife, he learnt that the constable was not at home. Wildeve said he would wait.

The minutes ticked on, and the constable did not arrive. Wildeve cooled down from his state of high indignation to a restless dissatisfaction with himself, the scene, the constable's wife, and the whole set of circumstances. He arose and left the house. Altogether, the experience of that evening had had a cooling, not to say a chilling, effect on misdirected tenderness, and Wildeve was in no mood to ascend again to Alderworth after nightfall in hope of a stray glance from Eustacia.

Thus far the reddleman had been tolerably successful in his rude contrivances for keeping down Wildeve's inclination to rove in the evening. He had nipped in the bud the possible meeting between Eustacia and her old lover this very night. But he had not anticipated that the tendency of his action would be to divert Wildeve's movement rather than to stop it. The gambling with the guineas had not conduced to make him a welcome guest to Clym; but to call upon his wife's relative was natural, and he was determined to see Eustacia. It was necessary to choose some less untoward hour than ten o'clock at night. 'Since it is unsafe to go in the evening,' he said, 'I'll go by day.'

Meanwhile Venn had left the heath and gone to call upon Mrs. Yeobright, with whom he had been on friendly terms since she had learnt what a providential countermove he had made towards the restitution of the family guineas. She wondered at the lateness of his call, but had no objection to see him.

He gave her a full account of Clym's affliction, and of the state in which he was living; then, referring to Thomasin, touched gently upon the apparent sadness of her days. 'Now, ma'am, depend upon it,' he said, 'you couldn't do a better thing for either of 'em than to make yourself at home in their houses, even if there should be a little rebuff at first.'

'Both she and my son disobeyed me in marrying; therefore I have no interest in their households. Their troubles are of their own making.' Mrs. Yeobright tried to speak severely; but the account of her son's state had moved her more than she cared to show.

'Your visits would make Wildeve walk straighter than he is inclined to do, and might prevent unhappiness up the hill.'

'What do you mean?'

'I saw something to-night up there, which I didn't like at all.'

I wish your son's house and Mr. Wildeve's were a hundred miles apart instead of three.'

'Then there *was* an understanding between him and Clym's wife when he made a fool of Thomasin!'

'We'll hope there's no understanding now.'

'And our hope will probably be very vain. Oh Clym! Oh Thomasin!'

'There's no harm done yet. In fact, I've persuaded Wildeve to mind his own business.'

'How?'

'Oh, not by talking. By a plan of mine called the silent system.'

'I hope you'll succeed.'

'I shall if you help me by calling and making friends with your son. You'll have a chance then of using your eyes.'

'Well, since it has come to this,' said Mrs. Yeobright sadly, 'I will own to you, reddleman, that I thought of going. I should be much happier if we were reconciled. The marriage is unalterable; my life may be cut short, and I should wish to die in peace. He is my only son—and since sons are made of such stuff, I am not sorry I have no other. As for Thomasin, I never expected much from her; and she has not disappointed me. But I forgave her long ago; and I forgive him now. I'll go.'

At this very time of the reddleman's conversation with Mrs. Yeobright at Blooms-End, another conversation on the same subject was languidly proceeding at Alderworth.

All the day Clym had borne himself as if his mind were too full of its own matter to allow him to care about outward things, and his words now showed what had occupied his thoughts. 'Since I have been away to-day, Eustacia, I have considered that something must be done to heal up this ghastly breach between my mother and myself. It troubles me.'

'What do you propose to do?' said Eustacia abstractedly, for she could not clear away from her the excitement caused by Wildeve's recent manœuvre for an interview.

'You seem to take a very mild interest in what I propose, little or much,' said Clym with tolerable warmth.

'You mistake me,' she answered, reviving at his reproach. 'I am only thinking of things.'

'What things?'

'Partly of that moth whose skeleton is getting burnt up in the wick of the candle. But you know I always take an interest in what you say.'

‘Very well, dear. Then I think I must go and call upon her. It is a thing I am not at all too proud to do, and only a feeling that I might irritate her has kept me away so long. But I must do something. It is wrong in me to allow this sort of thing to go on.’

‘What have you to blame yourself about?’

‘She is getting old, and her life is lonely, and I am her only son.’

‘She has Thomasin.’

‘Thomasin is not her daughter; and if she were, that would not excuse me. But this is beside the point. I have made up my mind to go to her, and all I wish to ask you is whether you will do your best to help me—that is, forget the past, and if she shows her willingness to be reconciled, meet her half way by welcoming her to our house, or by accepting a welcome to hers?’

At first Eustacia had closed her lips as if she would rather do anything on the whole globe than what he suggested. But the lines of her mouth softened with thought, though not so far as they might have softened; and she said, ‘I will put nothing in your way; but after what has passed, it is asking too much that I go and make advances.’

‘You never distinctly told me what did pass between you.’

‘I could not do it then, nor can I now. Sometimes more bitterness is sown in five minutes than can be got rid of in a whole life; and that may be the case here.’ She paused a few moments, and added: ‘If you had never returned to your native place, Clym, what a blessing it would have been for you! . . . It has altered the destinies of——’

‘Three people.’

‘Five,’ Eustacia thought; but she kept that in.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA.

SEPTEMBER 1878.

The Return of the Native.

BY THOMAS HARDY.

BOOK IV.—CHAPTER V.

THE JOURNEY ACROSS THE HEATH.

THURSDAY, the thirty-first of August, was one of a series of days during which snug houses were stifling and draughts were treats; when cracks appeared in clayey gardens and were called earthquakes by apprehensive children; when loose spokes were discovered in the wheels of carts and carriages; when stinging insects haunted the air, the earth, and the little water that was to be found.

In Mrs. Yeobright's garden large-leaved plants of a tender kind flagged by ten o'clock in the morning; rhubarb bent downward at eleven; and even stiff cabbages were limp by noon.

It was about eleven o'clock on this day that Mrs. Yeobright started across the heath towards her son's house, to do her best in effecting a reconciliation with him and Eustacia, in conformity with her words to the reddleman. She had hoped to get well advanced in her walk before the heat of the day was at its highest, but after setting out she found that this was not to be done. The sun had branded the whole heath with his mark, even the purple heath-flowers having put on a brownness under the dry blazes of the few preceding days. Every valley was filled with air like that of a kiln, and the clean quartz sand of the winter water-courses, which formed summer paths, had undergone a species of cineration since the drought had set in.

In cool fresh weather Mrs. Yeobright would have found no inconvenience in walking to Alderworth; but the present torrid attack made the journey a heavy undertaking for a woman past middle age; and at the end of the second mile she wished that she had hired Fairway to drive her a portion at least of the dis-

tance. But from the point at which she had arrived it was as easy to reach Clym's house as to get home again. So she went on, the air around her pulsating silently, and oppressing the earth with lassitude. She looked at the sky overhead, and saw that the sapphirine hue of the zenith in spring and early summer had completely gone, and was replaced by a metallic violet.

Occasionally she came to a spot where independent worlds of ephemerons were passing their time in mad carousal, some in the air, some on the hot ground and vegetation, some in the tepid and stringy water of a nearly dried pool. All the shallower ponds had decreased to a vaporous mud, amid which the maggoty shapes of innumerable obscene creatures could be indistinctly seen, heaving and wallowing with enjoyment. Being a woman not disinclined to philosophise, she sometimes sat down under her umbrella to rest and to watch their happiness, for a certain hopefulness as to the result of her visit gave ease to her mind, and, between her important thoughts, left it free to dwell on any infinitesimal matter which caught her eyes.

Mrs. Yeobright had never before been to her son's house, and its exact position was unknown to her. She tried one ascending path, and another, and found that they led her astray. Retracing her steps, she came again to an open level, where she perceived at a distance a man at work. She went towards him and inquired the way.

The labourer pointed out the direction, and added, 'Do you see that furze-cutter, ma'am, going up that foot-path yond?'

Mrs. Yeobright strained her eyes, and at last said that she did perceive him.

'Well, if you follow him, you can make no mistake. He's going to the same place, ma'am.'

She followed the figure indicated. He appeared of a russet hue, not more distinguishable from the scene around him than the green caterpillar from the leaf it feeds on. His progress when actually walking was more rapid than Mrs. Yeobright's; but she was enabled to keep at an equable distance from him by his habit of stopping whenever he came to a brake of brambles, where he paused awhile. On coming in her turn to each of these spots she found half-a-dozen long limp brambles which he had cut from the bush during his halt, and laid out straight beside the path. They were evidently intended for furze-faggot bonds, which he meant to collect on his return. The silent being who thus occupied himself seemed to be of no more account in life than an insect. He appeared as a mere parasite of the heath, fretting its surface in his daily labour as a moth frets a garment, entirely engrossed with

its products, having no knowledge of anything outside its slopes of fern, furze, heath, lichens, and moss.

The furze-cutter was so engrossed in the business of his journey that he never turned his head; and his leather-legged and gauntleted form at length became to her as nothing more than a moving hand-post set to show her the way. Suddenly she was attracted to his individuality by observing peculiarities in his walk. It was a gait she had seen somewhere before; and the gait revealed the man to her, as the gait of Ahimaaz in the distant plain made him known to the watchman of the king. 'His walk is exactly as my husband's used to be,' she said; and then the thought burst upon her that the furze-cutter was her son.

She was scarcely able to familiarise herself with this strange reality. She had been told that Clym was in the habit of cutting furze, but she had supposed that he occupied himself with the labour only at odd times, by way of useful pastime; yet she now beheld him as a furze-cutter and nothing more—wearing the regulation dress of the craft, and apparently thinking the regulation thoughts, to judge by his motions. Planning a dozen hasty schemes for at once preserving him and Eustacia from this mode of life, she throbbingly followed the way.

At one side of Clym's house was a knoll, and on the top of the knoll a clump of Scotch fir-trees, so highly thrust up into the sky that their foliage from a distance appeared as a black spot in the air above the horizon. On reaching this place Mrs. Yeobright felt distressingly agitated, weary, and unwell. She ascended, and sat down under their shade to recover herself, and to consider how best to break the ground with Eustacia, so as not to irritate a woman underneath whose apparent indolence lurked passions even stronger and more active than her own.

The trees beneath which she sat were singularly battered, rude, and wild, and for a few minutes Mrs. Yeobright dismissed thoughts of her own storm-broken and exhausted state to contemplate theirs. Not a bough in the nine trees which composed the group but was splintered, lopped, and distorted by the fierce weather that there held them at its mercy whenever it prevailed. Some were blasted and split as if by lightning, black stains as from fire marking their sides, while the ground at their feet was strewn with dead sticks and heaps of cones blown down in the gales of past years. The place was called the Devil's Bellows, and it was only necessary to come there on a March or November night to discover the forcible reasons for that name. On the present heated afternoon, when no perceptible wind was blowing,

the trees kept up a perpetual moan which one could hardly believe to be caused by the air.

Here she sat for twenty minutes or more ere she could summon resolution to go down to the door, her courage being lowered to zero by her physical lassitude. To any other person than a mother it might have seemed a little humiliating that she, the elder of the two women, should be the first to make advances. But Mrs. Yeobright had well considered all that, and she only thought how best to make her visit appear to Eustacia not abject but wise.

From her elevated position the exhausted woman could perceive the back roof of the house below, and the garden, and the whole enclosure of the little domicile. And now, at the moment of rising, she saw a man approaching the gate. His manner was peculiar; being hesitating, and not that of a person come on business or by invitation. His next action was to survey the house with interest, and then walk round and scan the outer boundary of the garden, as one might have done had it been the birthplace of Shakespeare, the prison of Mary Stuart, or the Château of Hougoumont. After passing round and again reaching the gate, he went in. Mrs. Yeobright was vexed at this, having reckoned on finding her son and his wife by themselves; but a moment's thought showed her that the presence of an acquaintance would take off the awkwardness of her first appearance in the house, by confining the talk to general matters until she had begun to feel comfortable with them. She came down the hill to the gate, and looked into the hot garden.

There lay the cat asleep on the bare gravel of the path, as if beds, rugs, and carpets were unendurable. The leaves of the hollyhocks hung like half-closed umbrellas, the sap almost simmered in the stems, and foliage with a smooth surface glared like metallic mirrors. A small apple-tree, of the sort called Rathe-ripe, grew just inside the gate, the only one which thrived in the garden by reason of the lightness of the soil; and among the fallen apples on the ground beneath were wasps, rolling drunk with the juice, or creeping about the little caves in each fruit which they had eaten out before being stupefied by its sweetness. By the door lay Clym's furze-hook, and the handful of faggot bonds she had seen him gather; they had plainly been thrown down there as he entered the house.

CHAPTER VI.

AN AWKWARD CONJUNCTURE; AND ITS RESULTS UPON THE PEDESTRIAN.

WILDEVE, as has been stated, was determined to visit Eustacia boldly, by day, and on the easy terms of relative, since the reddleman had made it uncomfortable for him to walk that way by night. The spell that she had thrown over him in the moonlight dance on the green made it absolutely impossible for a man having no strong moral force within him to keep away altogether. He merely calculated on speaking to her and her husband in an ordinary manner, chatting a little while, and then leaving again. Every outward sign was to be proper, seemly, and natural; but the one great fact would be there to satisfy him; he would see her. He did not even desire Clym's absence, since it was just possible that Eustacia might resent any situation which might compromise her dignity as a wife, whatever the state of her heart towards him.

He went accordingly; and it so happened that the time of his arrival coincided with that of Mrs. Yeobright's pause on the hill near the house. When he had looked round the premises in the manner she had noticed, he went and knocked at the door. There was a few minutes' interval, and then the key turned in the lock, the door opened, and Eustacia herself confronted him.

Nobody could have imagined from her bearing now that here stood the same woman who had joined with him in the impassioned dance of the week before, unless indeed he could have penetrated below the surface and gauged the real depth of that still stream.

'I hope you reached home safely?' said Wildeve.

'Oh yes,' she carelessly returned.

'And were you not tired the next day? I feared you might be.'

'I was rather. You need not speak low—nobody will overhear us. My small servant is gone on an errand to the village.'

'Then Clym is not at home?'

'Yes, he is.'

'Oh! I thought that perhaps you had locked the door because you were alone and were afraid of tramps.'

'No—here is my husband.'

They had been standing in the entry. Closing the front door and turning the key as before, she threw open the door of the adjoining room and asked him to step in. Wildeve entered, the room appearing to be empty; but as soon as he had advanced a few steps he started. On the hearth-rug lay Clym asleep. Beside him were the leggings, thick boots, leather gloves, and sleeve-

waistcoat in which he worked: these he had thrown off for comfort, and had wrapped himself in a faded Parisian dressing-gown.

‘You may go in; you will not disturb him,’ she said, following behind. ‘My reason for fastening the door is that he may not be intruded upon by any chance comer while lying here, if I should be in the garden or upstairs.’

‘Why is he sleeping there?’ said Wildeve in low tones.

‘He is very weary. He went out at half-past four this morning, and has been working ever since. He cuts furze because it is the only thing he can do that does not put any strain upon his poor eyes.’ The contrast between the sleeper’s appearance and Wildeve’s at this moment was painfully apparent to Eustacia, Wildeve being elegantly dressed in a new summer suit and light hat; and she continued:—‘Ah! you don’t know how differently he appeared when I first met him, though it is such a little while ago. His hands were as white and soft as mine; and look at them now, how rough and brown they are. His complexion is by nature fair, and that russet look he has now, all of a colour with his leather clothes, is caused by the burning of the sun.’

‘Why does he go out at all?’

‘Because he hates to be idle, though what he earns doesn’t add much to our exchequer. However, he says that when people are living upon their capital they must keep down current expenses by turning a penny where they can.’

‘The fates have not been kind to you, Eustacia Yeobright.’

‘I have nothing to thank them for.’

‘Nor has he—except for their one great gift to him.’

‘What’s that?’

Wildeve looked her in the eyes.

Eustacia blushed for the first time that day. ‘Well, it is a questionable gift,’ she said quietly. ‘I thought you meant the gift of content—which he has, and I have not.’

‘I can understand content in such a case—though how the outward situation can attract him puzzles me.’

‘That’s because you don’t know him. He’s an enthusiast about ideas, and careless about outward things. He often reminds me of the Apostle Paul.’

‘I am glad to hear that he’s so grand in character as that.’

‘Yes; but the worst of it is that, though Paul was excellent as a man in the Bible, he would hardly have done in real life.’

‘Well, if that means that your marriage is a misfortune to you, you know who is to blame.’

‘The marriage is no misfortune,’ she said, showing more emotion than had as yet appeared in her. ‘It is simply the accident which

has happened since that has been the cause of my ruin. I have certainly got thistles for figs in a worldly sense, but how could I tell what time would bring forth ?'

'Sometimes, Eustacia, I think it is a judgment upon you. You rightly belonged to me, you know ; and I had no idea of losing you.'

'No, it was not my fault. Two could not belong to you ; and remember that, before I was aware, you turned aside to another woman. It was cruel levity in you to do that. I never dreamt of playing such a game on my side till you began it on yours.'

'I meant nothing by it,' replied Wildeve. 'It was a mere interlude. Men are given to the trick of having a passing fancy for somebody else in the midst of a permanent love, which reasserts itself afterwards just as before. On account of your rebellious manner to me I was tempted to go further than I should have done ; and when you still would keep playing the same tantalizing part, I went further still, and married her.' Turning and looking again at the unconscious form of Clym, he added, 'I am afraid that you don't value your prize, Clym. He ought to be happier than I in one thing at least. He may know what it is to come down in the world, and to be afflicted with a great personal calamity ; but he probably doesn't know what it is to lose the woman he loved.'

'He is not ungrateful for winning her,' said Eustacia, 'and in that respect he is a good man. Many women would go far for such a husband. But do I desire unreasonably much in wanting what is called life—music, poetry, passion, war, and all the beating and pulsing that is going on in the great arteries of the world ? That was the shape of my youthful dream ; but I did not get it. Yet I thought I saw the way to it in my Clym.'

'And you only married him on that account ?'

'There you mistake me. I married him because I loved him. But I won't say that I didn't love him partly because I thought I saw a promise of that life in him.'

'You have dropped into your old mournful key.'

'But I am not going to be depressed,' she cried excitedly. 'I began a new system by going to that dance, and I mean to stick to it. Clym can sing merrily ; why should not I ?'

Wildeve looked thoughtfully at her. 'It is easier to say you will sing than to do it, though if I could I would encourage you in your attempt. But as life means nothing to me without one thing which is now impossible, you will forgive me for not being able to encourage you.'

'Damon, what is the matter with you, that you speak like that ?' she asked, raising her deep-shady eyes to his.

'That's a thing I shall never tell plainly ; and perhaps if I try to tell you in riddles you will not care to guess them.'

Eustacia remained silent for a minute, and she said, 'We are in a strange relationship to-day. You mince matters to an uncommon nicety. You mean, Damon, that you still love me. Well, that gives me sorrow, for I am not made so entirely happy by my marriage that I am willing to spurn you for the information, as I ought to do. But we have said too much about this—Do you mean to wait until my husband is awake ?'

'I thought to speak to him ; but it is unnecessary. Eustacia, if I offend you by not forgetting you, you are right to mention it ; but do not talk of spurning.'

She did not reply, and they stood looking musingly at Clym as he slept on in that profound sleep which is the result of physical labour carried on in circumstances that wake no nervous thrill. While they thus watched him a click at the gate was audible, and a knock came to the door. Eustacia went to a window, and looked out.

Her countenance changed. First she became crimson, and then the red subsided till it even partially left her lips.

'Shall I go away ?' said Wildeve, standing up.

'I hardly know.'

'Who is it ?'

'Mrs. Yeobright. Oh, what she said to me that day ! I cannot understand this visit—what does she mean ? And she suspects that past time of ours.'

'I am in your hands. If you think she had better not see me here, I'll go into the next room.'

'Well, yes : go.'

Wildeve at once withdrew ; but before he had been half a minute in the adjoining apartment Eustacia came after him.

'No,' she said ; 'we won't have any of this. If she comes in, she must see you—I have done no wrong. But how can I open the door to her, when she wishes not to see me, but her son ?'

Mrs. Yeobright knocked again more loudly.

'Her knocking will, in all likelihood, awake him,' continued Eustacia ; 'and then he will let her in himself. Ah—listen.'

They could hear Clym moving in the other room, as if disturbed by the knocking, and he uttered the word 'mother.'

'Yes—he is awake—he will go to the door,' she said, with a breath of relief. 'Come this way. I have a bad name with her, and you must not be seen. Thus I am obliged to act by stealth, not because I have done ill, but because others are pleased to say so.'

By this time she had taken him to the back door, which was

open, disclosing a path leading down the garden. 'Now one word, Damon,' she remarked, as he stepped forth. 'This is your first visit here; let it be your last. We have been hot lovers in our time, but it won't do now. Good-bye.'

'Good-bye,' said Wildev. 'I have had all I came for, and I am satisfied.'

'What was it?'

'A sight of you. Upon my eternal honour, I came for no more.'

Wildev. kissed his hand to the beautiful girl he addressed, and passed into the garden, where she watched him down the path, over the stile at the end, and into the ferns outside, which broomed his hips as he went along and became lost in their thickets. When he had quite gone, she slowly turned, and directed her attention to the interior of the house, expecting to hear Clym and his mother in conversation.

But, hearing no words, she concluded that they were talking in whispers. It was therefore possible that her presence might not be desired at this moment of their first meeting, or that it would at all events be superfluous. She resolved to wait till Clym came to look for her, and with this object glided back into the garden. Here she perfunctorily occupied herself for a few minutes, till, finding no notice was taken of her, she again retraced her steps, advancing to the front entrance, where she listened for voices in the parlour. But, hearing none, she opened the door and went in. To her astonishment Clym lay precisely as Wildev. and herself had left him, his sleep apparently unbroken. Eustacia hastened to the door, and, in spite of her reluctance to open it to a woman who had spoken of her so bitterly, she unfastened it and looked out. Nobody was to be seen. There, by the scraper, lay Clym's hook and the handful of faggot-bonds he had just brought home; in front of her were the empty path, the garden-gate standing slightly ajar; and, beyond, the great valley of purple heath thrilling silently in the sun. Mrs. Yeobright was gone.

Clym's mother was at this time following a path which lay hidden from Eustacia by a shoulder of the hill. Her walk thither from the garden-gate had been hasty and determined, as of a woman who was now no less anxious to escape from the scene than she had previously been to enter it. Her eyes were fixed on the ground; within her two sights were graven—that of Clym's hook and brambles at the door, and that of a face at a window. Her lips trembled, becoming unnaturally thin, as she murmured, 'Tis too much, Clym!—how can he bear to do it!—where was he!'

In her anxiety to get out of the direct view of the house, she had diverged from the straightest path homeward, and while looking about to regain it, she came upon a little boy gathering whortleberries in a hollow. The boy was Johnny Nunsuch, who had been Eustacia's stoker at the bonfire, and with the tendency of a minute body to gravitate towards a greater, he began hovering round Mrs. Yeobright as soon as she appeared, and trotted on beside her without perceptible consciousness of his act.

Mrs. Yeobright spoke to him as one in a mesmeric sleep. 'Tis a long way home, my child, and we shall not get there till evening.'

'I shall,' said her small companion. 'I am going to play marnells afore supper, and we go to supper at six o'clock because father comes home. Does your father come home at six too?'

'No: he never comes; nor my son neither, nor anybody.'

'What have made you so down? Have you seen a ooser?'

'I have seen what's worse—a woman's face looking at me through a window-pane.'

'Is that a bad sight?'

'Yes. It is always a bad sight to see a woman looking out at a weary wayfarer, and not letting her in.'

'Once when I went to Throope Great Pond to catch effets I seed myself looking up at myself, and I was frightened and jumped back like anything!'

'If they had only shown signs of meeting my advances half-way, how well it might have been done! But there is no chance. Shut out! She must have set him against me. Can there be beautiful bodies without hearts inside? I think so. I would not have done it against a neighbour's cat on such a fiery day as this!'

'What is it you say?'

'Never again—never. Not even if they send for me!'

'You must be a very curious woman to talk like that.'

'Oh, no, not at all,' she said, returning to the boy's prattle. 'Most people who grow up, and have children, talk as I do. When you grow up your mother will talk as I do, too.'

'I hope she won't; because 'tis very bad to talk nonsense.'

'Yes, child; it is nonsense, I suppose. Are you not nearly spent with the heat?'

'Yes. But not so much as you be.'

'How do you know?'

'Your face is white and wet, and your head is hanging-down-like.'

'Ah, I am exhausted from 'inside.'

‘Why do you, every time you take a step, go like this?’ The child, in speaking, gave to his motion the jerk and limp of an invalid.

‘Because I have a burden which is more than I can bear.’

The little boy remained silently pondering, and they tottered on side by side until more than a quarter of an hour had elapsed; when Mrs. Yeobright, whose weakness plainly increased, said to him, ‘I must sit down here to rest.’

When she had seated herself, he looked long in her face, and said, ‘How funny you draw your breath—like a lamb when you drive him till he’s nearly done for. Do you always draw your breath like that?’

‘Not always.’ Her voice was now so low as to be scarcely above a whisper.

‘You will go to sleep there, I suppose, won’t you? You have shut your eyes already.’

‘No. I shall not sleep much till—another day, and then I hope to have a long, long one—very long. Now, can you tell me if Bottom Pond is dry this summer?’

‘Bottom Pond is, but Parker’s Pool isn’t, because he is deep, and is never dry—’tis just over there.’

‘Is the water clear?’

‘Yes, middling—except where the heath-croppers walk into it.’

‘Then take this, and go as fast as you can, and dip me up the clearest you can find. I am very faint.’

She drew from the small willow reticule which she carried in her hand an old-fashioned china teacup without a handle; it was one of half-a-dozen of the same sort lying in the reticule, which she had preserved ever since her childhood, and had brought with her to-day as a small present for Clym and Eustacia.

The boy started on his errand, and soon came back with the water, such as it was. Mrs. Yeobright attempted to drink, but it was so warm as to give her nausea; and she threw it away. Afterwards she still remained sitting, with her eyes closed.

The boy waited, played near her, caught several of the little brown butterflies which abounded, and then said as he waited again, ‘I like going on better than biding still. Will you soon start again?’

‘I don’t know.’

‘I wish I might go on by myself,’ he resumed, fearing, apparently, that he was to be pressed into some unpleasant service.

‘Do you want me any more, please?’

Mrs. Yeobright made no reply.

‘What shall I tell mother?’ the boy continued.

‘Tell her you have seen a woman cast off by her son.’

Before quite leaving her, he threw upon her face a wistful glance, as if he were possessed by a misgiving about the generosity of forsaking her thus. He gazed into her face in a vague wondering manner, like that of one examining some strange old manuscript, the key to whose characters is undiscoverable. He was not so young as to be absolutely without a sense that sympathy was demanded, he was not old enough to be free from the terror felt in childhood at beholding misery in adult quarters hitherto deemed impregnable; and whether she were in a position to cause trouble or to suffer from it, whether she and her affliction were something to pity or something to fear, it was beyond him to decide. He lowered his eyes, and went on without another word. Before he had gone half a mile he had forgotten all about her, except that she was a woman who had sat down to rest.

Mrs. Yeobright's exertions, physical and emotional, had well-nigh prostrated her; but she continued to creep along in short stages with long breaks between. The sun had now got far to the west of south, and stood directly in her face, like some merciless incendiary, brand in hand, waiting to consume her. With the departure of the boy all visible animation disappeared from the landscape, though the intermittent husky notes of the male grasshoppers from every tuft of furze were enough to show that, amid the prostration of the larger animal species, an unseen insect world was busy in all the fulness of life.

At length she reached a slope about two-thirds of the whole distance from Alderworth to her own home, where a little patch of shepherd's-thyme intruded upon the path; and she sat down upon the perfumed mat it formed there. In front of her a colony of ants had established a thoroughfare across the way, where toiled a never-ending and heavy-laden throng. To look down upon them was like observing a city street from the top of a tower. She remembered that this bustle of ants had been in progress for years at the same spot—doubtless those of the old times were the ancestors of these who walked there now. She leant back to obtain more thorough rest, and the soft eastern portion of the sky was as great a relief to her eyes as the thyme was to her head. While she looked a heron arose on that side of the sky, and flew on with his face towards the sun. He had come dripping wet from some pool in the valleys, and as he flew the edges and lining of his wings, his thighs, and his breast were so caught by the bright light that he appeared as if formed of frosted silver. Up in the zenith where he was seemed a free and happy place, away from all contact with the earthly ball to which she was pinioned;

and she wished that she could arise uncrushed from its surface, and fly as he flew then.

But being a mother, it was inevitable that she should soon cease to ruminate upon her own condition. Had the track of her next thought been marked by a streak in the air, like the path of a meteor, it would have shown a direction contrary to the heron's, and have descended to the eastward upon the roof of Clym's house.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAGICAL MEETING OF TWO OLD FRIENDS.

HE in the mean time had aroused himself from sleep, sat up, and looked around. Eustacia was sitting in a chair hard by him, and though she held a book in her hand, she had not looked into it for some time.

'Well, indeed!' said Clym, brushing his eyes with his hands. 'How soundly I have slept! I have had such a tremendous dream, too: one I shall never forget.'

'I thought you had been dreaming,' said she.

'Yes. It was about my mother. I dreamt that I took you to her house to make up differences, and when we got there we couldn't get in, though she kept on crying to us for help. However, dreams are dreams. What o'clock is it, Eustacia?'

'Half-past two.'

'So late, is it? I didn't mean to stay so long. By the time I have had something to eat it will be after three.'

'Ann is not come back from the village; and I thought I would let you sleep on till she returned.'

Clym went to the window and looked out. Presently he said, 'Week after week passes, and yet mother does not come. I thought I should have heard something from her long before this.'

Thought, misgiving, regret, fear, resolution, ran their swift course of expression in Eustacia's dark eye. She was face to face with a monstrous difficulty; and she resolved to get free of it by postponement.

'I must certainly go to Blooms-End soon,' he continued, 'and I think I had better go alone.' He picked up his leggings and gloves, threw them down again, and added, 'As dinner will be so late to-day I will not go back to the heath, but work in the garden till the evening, and then, when it will be cooler, I will walk to Blooms-End. I am quite sure that, if I make a little advance, mother will be willing to forget all. It will be rather late before I can get home, as I shall not be able to do the distance either

way in less than an hour. But you will not mind for one evening, dear? What are you thinking of to make you look so abstracted?’

‘I cannot tell you,’ she said heavily. ‘I wish we didn’t live here, Clym. The world seems all wrong in this place.’

‘Well—if we make it so. I wonder if Thomasin has been to Blooms-End lately. I hope so. But probably not, as she is, I believe, expecting to be confined in a week or two. I wish I had thought of that before. Mother must indeed be very lonely.’

‘I don’t like you going to-night.’

‘Why not to-night?’

‘Something may be said which will terribly injure me.’

‘My mother is not vindictive,’ said Clym, his colour faintly rising.

‘But I wish you would not go,’ Eustacia repeated in a low tone. ‘If you will agree not to go to-night, I promise to go by myself to her house to-morrow, and make it up with her, and wait till you fetch me.’

‘Why do you want to do that at this particular time, when at every previous time that I have proposed it you have refused?’

‘I cannot explain, further than that I should like to see her alone before you go,’ she answered with an impatient move of her head, and looking at him with an anxiety more frequently seen upon those of a sanguine temperament than upon such as herself.

‘Well, it is very odd that just when I have decided to go myself you should want to do what I proposed long ago. If I wait for you to go to-morrow, another day will be lost; and I know I shall be unable to rest another night without having been. I want to get this settled, and will. You must visit her afterwards: it will be all the same.’

‘I could even go with you now?’

‘You could scarcely walk there and back without a longer rest than I shall take. No, not to-night, Eustacia.’

‘Let it be as you say, then,’ she replied in the quiet way of one who, though willing to ward off evil consequences by a mild effort, would let events fall out as they might sooner than wrestle hard to direct them.

Clym then went into the garden; and a thoughtful languor stole over Eustacia for the remainder of the afternoon, which her husband attributed to the heat of the weather.

In the evening he set out on the journey. Although the heat of summer was yet intense, the days had considerably shortened; and before he had advanced a mile on his way all the heath purples, browns, and greens had merged in a uniform dress without airiness or gradation, and broken only by touches of white where

the little heaps of clean quartz sand showed the entrance to a rabbit-burrow, or where the white flints of a footpath lay like a thread over the slopes. In almost every one of the isolated and stunted thorns which grew here and there, a night-hawk revealed his presence by whirring like the clack of a mill as long as he could hold his breath, then stopping, flapping his wings, wheeling round the bush, alighting, and after a silent interval of listening beginning to whirr again. At each brushing of Clym's feet white miller-moths flew into the air just high enough to catch upon their dusty wings the mellowed light from the west, which now shone across the depressions and levels of the ground without falling thereon to light them up.

Yeobright walked on amid this quiet scene with a hope that all would soon be well. At length he came to the place where, four hours earlier, his mother had sat down exhausted on the knoll covered with shepherd's-thyme. His tread was noiseless here. Hence it was that a sound between a breathing and a moan, which suddenly spread into the air at this place, distinctly reached his ears. He stopped on the instant, looked to where the sound came from; but nothing appeared there above the verge of the hillock stretching against the sky in an unbroken line. He moved a few steps in that direction, and now he perceived a recumbent figure almost close at his feet.

Among the different possibilities as to the person's individuality which rushed upon Yeobright's mind, there did not for a moment occur to him any idea of one of his own family. On such a warm evening the person was as likely to be there from choice as from necessity. Sometimes furze-cutters had been known to sleep out-of-doors at these times, to save a long journey homeward and back again; but Clym then remembered the moan and looked closer, and saw that the form was feminine; and a distress came over him like cold air from a cave. But he was not absolutely certain that the woman was his mother till he stooped and beheld her face, pallid, and with closed eyes.

His breath went, as it were, out of his body, and the cry of anguish which would have escaped him died upon his lips. During the momentary interval that elapsed before he became conscious that something must be done, all sense of time and place left him, and it seemed as if he and his mother were as when he was a child with her many years ago on this heath, at hours similar to the present. Then he awoke to activity; and bending yet lower he found that she still breathed, and that her breath, though feeble, was regular, except when disturbed by an occasional gasp.

'O what is it! Mother, are you very ill?—you are not dying?'

he cried, pressing his lips to her face. 'I am your Clym. How did you come here? What does it all mean?'

At that moment the chasm in their lives, which his love for Eustacia had caused, was not remembered by Yeobright, and to him the present joined continuously with that friendly past that had been their experience before the division.

She moved her lips, appeared to know him, but could not speak; and then Clym began to consider how best to move her, as it would be necessary to get her away from the spot before the dews were intense. He was able-bodied, and his mother was thin. He clasped his arms round her, lifted her a little, and said, 'Does that hurt you?'

She shook her head, and he lifted her up; then, at a slow pace, went onward with his load. The air was now completely cool; but whenever he passed over a sandy patch of ground uncarpeted with vegetation, there was reflected from its surface into his face the heat which it had imbibed during the day. At the beginning of his undertaking he had thought but little of the distance which yet would have to be traversed before Blooms-End could be reached; but though he had slept that afternoon he soon began to feel the weight of his burden. Thus he proceeded, like Æneas with his father; the bats circling round his head, night-jars flapping their wings within a yard of his face, and not a human being within call.

While he was yet nearly a mile from the house his mother exhibited signs of restlessness under the constraint of being borne along, as if his arms were irksome to her. He lowered her upon his knees, and looked around. The point they had now reached, though far from home, was not more than half a mile from the group of cottages occupied by Fairway, Sam, Humphrey, and the Cantles. Moreover, fifty yards off stood a hut, built of clods and covered with thin turves, but now entirely disused. The simple outline of the lonely shed was visible, and thither he determined to direct his steps. As soon as he arrived he laid her down carefully by the entrance, and then ran and cut with his pocket-knife an armful of the driest fern. Spreading this within the shed, which was entirely open on one side, he placed his mother thereon; then he ran with all his might towards the dwelling of Fairway.

Nearly a quarter of an hour had passed, disturbed only by the broken breathing of the sufferer, when moving figures began to animate the line between heath and sky. In a few moments Clym arrived, with Fairway, Humphrey and Susan Nunsuch; Olly Dowden, who had chanced to be at Fairway's, Christian, and Grandfer Cante, following her helter-skelter behind. They had



Something was wrong with her foot.

brought a lantern and matches, water, a pillow, and a few other articles which had occurred to their minds in the hurry of the moment. Sam had been despatched to Blooms-End for brandy, and Humphrey fetched Fairway's pony, upon which he rode off to the nearest medical man, with directions to call at Wildeve's on his way, and inform Thomasin that her aunt was unwell.

Sam and the brandy soon arrived, and it was administered by the light of the lantern; after which she became sufficiently conscious to signify by signs that something was wrong with her foot. Olly Dowden at length understood her meaning, and examined the foot indicated. It was swollen and red. Even as they watched the red began to assume a more livid colour, in the midst of which appeared a scarlet speck, smaller than a pea, and it was found to consist of a drop of blood, which rose above the smooth flesh of her ankle in a hemisphere.

'I know what it is,' cried Sam. 'She has been stung by an adder!'

'Yes,' said Clym instantly. 'I remember when I was a child seeing just such a bite. O my poor mother!'

'It was my father who was bit,' said Sam. 'And there's only one way to cure it. You must rub the place with the fat of other adders, and the only way to get that is by frying them. That's what they did for him.'

'Tis an old remedy,' said Clym distractedly, 'and I have doubts about it. But we can do nothing else till the doctor comes.'

'Tis a sure cure,' said Olly Dowden with emphasis. 'I've used it when I used to go out nursing.'

'Then we must pray for daylight, to catch them,' said Clym gloomily.

'I will see what I can do,' said Sam.

He took a green hazel which he had used as a walking-stick, split it at the end, inserted a small pebble, and taking the lantern in his hand went out into the heath. Clym had by this time lit a small fire, and despatched Susan Nunsuch for a frying-pan. Before she had returned Sam came in with three adders, one briskly coiling and uncoiling in the cleft of the stick, and the other two hanging dead across it.

'I have only been able to get one alive and fresh as he ought to be,' said Sam. 'These limp ones are two I killed to-day at work, but as they don't die till the sun goes down, they can't be very stale meat.'

The live adder regarded the assembled group with a sinister look in its evil black eye, and the beautiful brown and jet pattern on its back seemed to intensify with indignation. Mrs. Yeobright

saw the creature, and the creature saw her : she quivered throughout, and averted her eyes.

'Look at that,' murmured Christian Cantle. 'Neighbours, how do we know but that something of the old serpent in God's garden, that gied the apple to the young woman with no clothes, lives on in adders and snakes still? Look at his eye—for all the world like a villanous sort of black currant. 'Tis to be hoped he can't ill-wish us. There's folks in heath who've been overlooked already. I will never kill another adder as long as I live.'

'Well, 'tis right to be afeard of things, if folks can't help it,' said Grandfer Cantle. 'T'would have saved me many a brave danger in my time.'

'I fancy I heard something outside the shed,' said Christian. 'I wish troubles would come in the daytime, for then a man could show his courage, and hardly beg for mercy of the most broomstick old woman he should see, if he was a brave man, and able to run out of her sight.'

'Even such an ignorant fellow as I should know better than do that,' said Sam.

'Well, there's calamities where we least expect it, whether or no. Neighbours, if Mrs. Yeobright were to die, d'ye think we should be took up and tried for the manslaughter of a woman?'

'No, they couldn't bring it in that,' said Sam, 'unless they could prove we had been poachers at some time of our lives. But she'll fetch round.'

'Now, if I had been stung by ten adders I should hardly have lost a day's work for't,' said Grandfer Cantle. 'Such is my spirit when I am on my mettle. But perhaps 'tis natural in a man trained for war. Yes, I've gone through a good deal; but nothing ever came amiss to me after I joined the Locals in 'four.' He shook his head and smiled at a mental picture of himself in uniform. 'I was always first in the most galliantest scrapes in my younger days.'

'I suppose that was because they always used to put the biggest fool afore,' said Fairway from the fire, beside which he knelt, blowing it with his breath.

'D'ye think so, Timothy?' said Grandfer Cantle, coming forward to Fairway's side, with sudden depression in his face. 'Then a man may feel for years that he is good solid company, and be wrong about himself after all?'

'Never mind that question, Grandfer. Stir your stumps, and get some more sticks. 'Tis very nonsense of an old man to prattle so when life and death's in mangling.'

'Yes, yes,' said Grandfer Cantle with melancholy conviction.

‘Well, this is a bad night altogether for them that have done well in their time, and if I were ever such a dab at the hautboy or tenor-viol, I shouldn’t have the heart to play tunes upon ’em now.’

Susan now arrived with the frying-pan, when the live adder was killed and the heads of the three taken off. The remainders, being cut into lengths and split open, were tossed into the pan, which began hissing and crackling over the fire. Soon a rill of clear oil trickled from the carcasses, whereupon Clym dipped the corner of his handkerchief into the liquid, and anointed the wound.

CHAPTER VIII.

EUSTACIA HEARS OF GOOD FORTUNE, AND SEES EVIL.

In the mean time Eustacia, left alone in her cottage at Alderworth, had become considerably depressed by the posture of affairs. The consequences which might result from Clym’s discovery that his mother had been turned from his door that day were not such as she feared, but they were likely to be disagreeable, and this was a quality in events which she hated as much as the dreadful.

To be left to pass the evening by herself was irksome to her at any time, and this evening it was more irksome than usual by reason of the excitements of the past hours. The two visits had stirred her into restlessness. She was not wrought to any great pitch of uneasiness by the probability of appearing in an ill light in the discussion between Clym and his mother, but she was wrought to vexation; and her slumbering activities were quickened to the extent of wishing that she had opened the door. She had certainly believed that Clym was awake, and the excuse would be an honest one as far as it went; but nothing could save her from censure in refusing to answer at the first knock. Yet, instead of blaming herself for the issue, she laid the fault upon the shoulders of some indistinct Zeus or colossal Ozymandias who had framed her situation and ruled her lot.

At this time of the year it was pleasanter to walk by night than by day, and when Clym had been absent about an hour she suddenly resolved to go out in the direction of Blooms-End, on the chance of meeting him on his return. When she reached the garden-gate she heard wheels approaching, and looking round beheld her grandfather coming up in his car.

‘I can’t stay a minute, thank ye,’ he answered to her greeting. ‘I am driving to East Egdon; but I turned up here just to tell you the news. Perhaps you have heard—about Mr. Wildeve’s fortune?’

‘No,’ said Eustacia blankly.

‘Well, he has come into a fortune of eleven thousand pounds—uncle died in Canada, just after hearing that all his family, whom he was sending home, had gone to the bottom in the “Cassiopeia;” so Wildeve has come into everything without in the least expecting it.’

Eustacia stood motionless awhile. ‘How long has he known of this?’ she asked.

‘Well, it was known to him this morning early, for I knew it at ten o’clock, when Charley came back. Now, he is what I call a lucky man. What a fool you were, Eustacia.’

‘In what way?’ she said, lifting her eyes in apparent calmness.

‘Why, in not sticking to him when you had him.’

‘Had him, indeed!’

‘I did not know there had ever been anything between you till lately; and faith, I should have been hot and strong against it if I had known; but since it seems that there was some sniffing between ye, why the deuce didn’t you stick to him?’

Eustacia made no reply, but she looked as if she could say as much upon that subject as he, if she chose.

‘And how is your poor purblind husband?’ continued the old man. ‘Not a bad fellow either, as far as he goes.’

‘He is quite well.’

‘It is a good thing for his cousin what-d’ye-call-her. By jingo, you ought to have been in that place, my girl! Now I must drive on. Do you want any assistance—what’s mine is yours, you know.’

‘Thank you, grandfather, we are not in want at present,’ she said coldly. ‘Clym cuts furze, but he does it mostly as a useful pastime, because he can do nothing else.’

‘He is paid for his pastime, isn’t he? Three shillings a hundred, I heard.’

‘Clym has money,’ she said, colouring; ‘but he likes to earn a little.’

‘Very well, good-bye.’ And the captain drove on.

When her grandfather was gone, Eustacia went on her way mechanically, but her thoughts were no longer concerning her mother-in-law and Clym. Wildeve, notwithstanding his complaints against his fate, had been seized upon by destiny and placed in the sunshine once more. Eleven thousand pounds! From every Egdon point of view he was a rich man. In Eustacia’s eyes, too, it was an ample sum—one sufficient to supply those wants of hers which had been stigmatized by Clym in his more austere moods as vain and luxurious. Though she was no lover of money, she loved what money could bring; and the new accessories she imagined around him clothed Wildeve with a great deal of interest,

She recollected now how quietly well-dressed he had been that morning: he had probably put on his newest suit, regardless of damage by briars and thorns. And then she thought of his manner towards herself.

‘Oh, I see it, I see it,’ she said. ‘How much he wishes he had me now, that he might give me all I desire!’

In recalling the details of his glances and words—at the time scarcely regarded—it became plain to her how greatly they had been dictated by his knowledge of this new event. ‘Had he been a man to bear a jilt ill-will, he would have told me of his good fortune in crowing tones: instead of doing that, he mentioned not a word, in deference to my misfortunes, and merely implied that he loved me still as one superior to him.’

Wildeve’s silence that day on what had happened to him was just the kind of behaviour calculated to make an impression on such a woman. Those delicate touches of good taste were, in fact, one of the strong points in his demeanour towards the other sex. The peculiarity of Wildeve was that, while at one time passionate, upbraiding, and resentful towards a woman, at another he would treat her with such unparalleled grace as to make previous neglect appear as no discourtesy, injury as no insult, interference as a delicate attention, and the ruin of her honour as excess of chivalry. This man, whose admiration to-day Eustacia had disregarded, whose good wishes she had scarcely taken the trouble to accept, whom she had showed out of the house by the back door, was the possessor of eleven thousand pounds, a man of fair professional education, and one who had served his articles with a civil engineer.

So intent was Eustacia upon Wildeve’s fortunes that she forgot how much closer to her own course were those of Clym; and instead of walking on to meet him at once, she sat down upon a stone. She was disturbed in her reverie by a voice behind, and turning her head beheld the old lover and fortunate inheritor of wealth immediately beside her.

She remained sitting, though the fluctuation in her look might have told any man who knew her so well as Wildeve that she was thinking of him.

‘How did you come here?’ she said in her clear low tone. ‘I thought you were at home.’

‘I went on to the village after leaving your garden; and now I have come back again: that’s all. Which way are you walking, may I ask?’

She waved her hand in the direction of Blooms-End. ‘I am going to meet my husband. I think I may possibly have got into trouble whilst you were with me to-day.’

‘How could that be?’

‘By not letting in Mrs. Yeobright.’

‘I hope that visit of mine did you no harm?’

‘None. It was not your fault,’ she said quietly.

By this time she had risen; and they involuntarily sauntered on together, without speaking, for two or three minutes; when Eustacia broke silence by saying, ‘I presume I must congratulate you.’

‘On what? O yes, on my eleven thousand pounds, you mean. Well, since I didn’t get something else, I must be content with getting that.’

‘You seem very indifferent about it. Why didn’t you tell me to-day when you came?’ she said in the tone of a neglected person. ‘I heard of it quite by accident.’

‘I did mean to tell you,’ said Wildeve. ‘But I—well, I will speak frankly—I did not like to mention it when I saw, Eustacia, that your star was not high. The sight of a man lying wearied out with hard work, as your husband lay, made me feel that to brag of my own fortune to you would be greatly out of place. Yet, as you stood there beside him, I could not help feeling, too, that in a great respect he was a richer man than I.’

At this Eustacia said with slumbering mischievousness, ‘What, would you exchange with him—your fortune for me?’

‘I certainly would,’ said Wildeve.

‘As we are imagining what is impossible and absurd, suppose we change the subject.’

‘Very well; and I will tell you of my plans for the future, if you care to hear them. I shall permanently invest nine thousand pounds, keep one thousand as ready money, and with the remaining thousand travel for a year or so.’

‘Travel? What a bright idea! Where will you go?’

‘From here to Paris, where I shall pass the winter and spring. Then I shall go to Italy, Greece, Egypt, and Palestine, before the hot weather comes on. In the summer I shall go to America, and then, by a plan not yet settled, I shall go to Australia and round to India. By that time I shall have begun to have had enough of it. Then I shall probably come back to Paris again; and there I shall stay as long as I can afford to.’

‘Back to Paris again!’ she murmured in a voice that was nearly a sigh. She had never once told Wildeve of the Parisian desires which Clym’s description had sown in her; yet here was he involuntarily in a position to gratify them. ‘You think a good deal of Paris,’ she added.

‘Yes. In my opinion, it is the central beauty-spot of the world.’

‘And in mine. And Thomasin will go with you?’

‘Yes; if she cares to. She may prefer to stay at home.’

‘So you will be going about, and I shall be staying here!’

‘I suppose you will. But we know whose fault that is.’

‘I am not blaming you,’ she said quickly.

‘Oh, I thought you were. If ever you *should* be inclined to blame me, think of a certain evening by Blackbarrow, when you promised to meet me and did not. You sent me a letter; and my heart ached to read that as I hope yours never will. That was one point of divergence. I then did something in haste. . . . But she is a good woman, and I will say no more.’

‘I know that the blame was on my side that time,’ said Eustacia. ‘But it had not always been so. However, it is my misfortune to be too sudden in feeling. Damon, don’t reproach me any more—I can’t bear that.’

They went on silently for a distance of a mile and more, when Eustacia said suddenly, ‘Haven’t you come out of your way, Mr. Wildeve?’

‘My way is anywhere to-night. I will go with you as far as the hill on which we can see Blooms-End, as it is getting late for you to be alone.’

‘Don’t trouble. I am not obliged to be out at all. I think I would rather you did not accompany me farther. This sort of thing would have an odd look if known.’

‘Very well, I will leave you. What light is that on the hill?’

She looked, and saw a flickering fire-light proceeding from the open side of a hovel a little way before them. The hovel, which she had hitherto always found empty, seemed to be inhabited now.

‘Since you have come so far,’ said Eustacia, ‘will you see me safely past that hut? I thought I should have met Clym somewhere about here, but as he doesn’t appear I will hasten on and get to Blooms-End before he leaves.’

They advanced to the turf-shed, and when they got near, the firelight and the lantern inside showed distinctly enough the form of a woman reclining on a bed of fern, a group of heath-men and women standing around her. Eustacia did not recognise Mrs. Yeobright in the reclining figure, nor Clym as one of the standers-by till she came close. Then she quickly pressed her hand upon Wildeve’s arm, and signified to him to come back from the open side of the shed into the shadow.

‘It is my husband and his mother,’ she whispered in an agitated voice. ‘What can it mean? Will you step forward and tell me?’

Wildeve left her side, and went to the back wall of the hut.

Presently Eustacia perceived that he was beckoning to her, and she advanced and joined him.

‘It is a serious case,’ said Wildeve.

From their position they could hear what was proceeding inside.

‘I cannot think where she could have been going,’ said Clym to someone. ‘She had evidently walked a long way, but even when she was able to speak just now she would not tell me where. What do you really think of her?’

‘There is a great deal to fear,’ was gravely answered in a voice which Eustacia recognised as that of the only surgeon in the district. ‘She has suffered somewhat from the bite of the adder; but it is exhaustion which has overpowered her. My impression is that her walk must have been exceptionally long.’

‘I used to tell her not to over-walk herself this weather,’ said Clym, with distress in his voice. ‘Do you think we did well in using the adder’s fat?’

‘Well, it is a very ancient remedy—the old remedy of the viper-catchers, I believe,’ replied the doctor. ‘It is mentioned as an infallible ointment by Hoffman, Mead, and I think the Abbé Fontana. Undoubtedly it was as good a thing as you could do; though I question if some other oils would not have been equally efficacious.’

‘Come here, come here!’ was then rapidly said in soft female tones; and Clym and the doctor could be heard rushing forward from the back part of the shed where they had been standing.

‘Oh, what is it?’ whispered Eustacia.

‘’Twas Thomasin who spoke,’ said Wildeve. ‘Then they have fetched her. I wonder if I had better go in—yet it might do harm.’

For a long time there was utter silence among the group within; and it was broken at last by Clym saying in an agonised voice, ‘O doctor, what does it mean?’

The doctor did not reply at once; ultimately he said, ‘She is sinking fast. Her heart was previously affected, and physical exhaustion has dealt the finishing blow.’

Then there was a weeping of females, then waiting, then hushed exclamations, then a strange gasping sound, then a painful stillness.

‘It is all over,’ said the doctor.

Farther back in the hut the cotters whispered, ‘Mrs. Yeobright is dead.’

Almost at the same moment the two watchers observed the form of a small old-fashioned child entering at the open side of the shed. Susan Nunsuch, whose boy it was, went forward to the opening, and silently beckoned to him to go back.

'I've got something to tell 'ee, mother,' he cried in a shrill tone. 'That woman asleep there walked along with me to-day; and she said I was to say that I had seen her, and she was a woman cast off by her son, and then I came on home.'

A confused sob as from a man was heard within, upon which Eustacia gasped faintly, 'I must go to him—yet, dare I do it? No: come away!'

When they had withdrawn from the neighbourhood of the shed, she said huskily, 'I am to blame for this. There is evil in store for me.'

'Was not she admitted to your house after all?' Wildeve inquired.

'No: and that's where it all lies, or I'm mistaken. I shall not intrude upon them: I shall go straight home. Damon, good-bye. I cannot speak to you any more now.'

They parted company; and when Eustacia had reached the next hill she looked back. A melancholy procession was wending its way by the light of the lantern from the hut towards Blooms-End. Wildeve was nowhere to be seen.

(To be continued.)

Our Scholastica.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

OUR Scholastica is two-fold—a woman and a house. The one is a Tyrolese peasant of the better class, the other the Gasthaus, or inn, of which she is the proprietress and landlady. The house, standing nearly three thousand feet above the level of the sea, is at the head of the Achensee—‘the prettiest lake in North Tyrol,’ says Baedeker; ‘the deepest in Europe,’ says Galignani; ‘going down as deep as the Valley of the Inn,’ adds tradition. So deep indeed is it that no one drowned therein is ever found again; witness that poor fellow who went through the ice one winter, with his sledge and two horses; and those many others who have been caught by cramp or apoplexy when bathing; not one of whom has ever been recovered from those dark blue depths, nor a trace of them found. Such as it is however, it is one of the favourite summer resorts of the Germans who rush off to the cool mountains and refreshing lakes when the heat becomes intolerable in the plains.

Only those who can put up with simple living, and to whom a climate that shames our own dear watery lake-land is not a vital objection, ought to come to Achensee, where one day of sunshine is the jewel set in the midst of three of gloom and four of rain. But that one day of sunshine redeems its seven untoward brethren; and those who have hearts to love such scenery as lies about this glorious lake are content with their lot, and take the bad with the good philosophically. ‘It cannot always rain,’ they say to themselves, as they look out morning after morning and see the mountains covered with mist, the lake dimpled with the big drops pouring from the ragged rain-clouds overhead, marked with those fatal ‘bad-weather streaks,’ and giving no promise of amendment, seeing that it is running the wrong way—that is, from the dark north to the sweet south, carrying rain and storm instead of receiving sunshine and soft zephyrs:—‘To-morrow it must be fine!’ To-morrow and to-morrow comes, and the rain comes with it—the inseparable attendant on the day. Will the sun ever shine again? Are warmth and brightness to be found anywhere? Is it possible that people are panting with heat so near as Innsbruck, or still nearer, only so far off as down that steep, rude hill to Jenbach? Are fruit and vegetables to be had in profusion, as last year in

Italy? Here, in the beginning of August, new potatoes are a luxury, marking a red-letter day; and the only fruit we ever see are wild wood-strawberries, and not many of these. Surely summer sunshine is a myth, summer richness a delusion! It is winter—winter with green fields, leafy trees, and wild flowers, but winter all the same; and we wear our heavy woollen garments, crouch over our stoves, and nestle under huge feather bed-covers as proof thereof.

Our Scholastica, the Wirthin, peasant as she is, belongs to history. Among her family treasures and heir-looms are a massive gold chain and medal presented to her great-grandfather by Maria Theresa, for fifty years' faithful service; and the family name is recorded in the annals of the war against Bavaria, in 1809, when Anton Aschbacher, her uncle, fought by the side of Höfer and Speckbacher, kept the Achenthal outposts against the enemy, was made Major for his gallantry, and returned to Achensee to find his homestead burnt to the ground. He rebuilt the house, hoping that Government would take it off his hands. It was then the Zollhaus, or custom-house; so that his hope was not so wild as may appear. Government however declined the offer; but gave Aschbacher permission to receive lodgers; and thus the old Zollhaus became the modern inn. But names, like traditions, live long in the Tyrol and die hard; and even now Scholastica is as often called the Zollhaus as not, while our host, Johann Messner or Scholasticus, is the Zollner, though he never levied a kreutzer-worth of duties, and though it is many years since, by the rectification of the frontier between Austria and Bavaria, the nuisance of the search-house was transferred from Achensee to Achenwald.

In course of time the inn came into the possession of our present good Scholastica, bequeathed to her by an aunt, also a Scholastica, and as well known in those days as is her niece in these.

Our Scholastica was the daughter of the village doctor; and of him, poor fellow, we may tell this sad but honourable anecdote. A stranger came to the place and was seized with cholera. Scholastica's father shut himself up with the sick man, isolating himself and his patient, so that the pestilence should not spread; cured his man; but himself took the disease and died. He was the only one in the place who suffered. Was not this being a martyr for the sake of humanity? Was not this dying at his post bravely and quietly, without the applause of man to cheer him on and with no prospect of historic renown to reward him already in anticipation by the promise of praise and fame? These quiet little simple stories of a brave man's heroism in out-of-the-way places are infi-

nately touching; and as consoling as touching; showing what possibilities are in humanity, and how all is not glare and glitter and melodramatic excitement, but that self-sacrifice can exist even when it has nothing save the good deed for its reward and conscience for its support.

Scholastica herself has her own life's romance which she tells her intimates; but we strangers do not know the exact truth, and I do not therefore like to give as truth what I have only heard from others. As she did not marry till late in life, and then took a servant in her own house, all sorts of gossiping stories are told, and what was a very simple matter enough was made into a mystery and a romance. One man told us that she had vowed herself to celibacy in her youth, but that, feeling the pressure of the steadily increasing business too great for her, she consulted her director, like a pious Catholic as she is, and that he told her to take Johann Messner for her spouse;—whereat she, obedient, consented. This romance goes on to say that the priest having so far disposed the will of his spiritual daughter, sent for Johann to mould him in conformity therewith. Having first received his confession, he bade him say his prayers, and then go back to the Gasthaus, and hear what his mistress had to say to him touching her mind to wed him. Johann, as obedient as Scholastica, returned a proud man and a happy; went into the room designated, where Scholastica was hiding behind the door; smiled first, then laughed outright; said the decisive words, and received the decisive reply; then took his mistress in his arms, and vowed that he would make her a faithful and loyal friend and helpmate. And the good, true-hearted fellow has kept his word. But all this is embroidery, not the real truth; yet, until our Scholastica tells me herself, and permits translation, it is all that I can say, for it is all that I have heard.

Our Scholastica, naturally childless, is however a woman essentially of the maternal type. Stout and comely for all her long years of work not unmixed with anxiety, she looks after her maids with motherly solicitude, and allows no 'fast' doings or improprieties of any kind in her house. All the gay folks go down to the Rainers' at the Achensee-hof, about three-quarters of a mile distant; where music and singing and dancing attract those laughing loungers who cannot get through even a summer in sublime scenery without social amusements. The Achensee-hof is the merrier house of the district; while our Scholastica is the quiet, steady-going, old-fashioned ark of respectability; and people who dislike all that savours of fastness come to the latter, and people who dread dulness and like amusement go to the former. The connection too which the Rainers have naturally made by their own artistry

helps to make the tone of the house bright and full of fun. For as they themselves are singers they attract the artistic world, as like draws like everywhere. Do not some of us remember them in London some three or four years ago?—that interesting family of Tyrolese singers who used to go to grand houses in costume and sing their simple songs and jodl for the amusement of the fashionable guests? These were the Rainers from the Achen-seehof, the house standing on the lake below Scholastica. How simple and sweet they looked among our painted and bepowdered dames! How manly the men—how modest the women! How odd it is to those of us who remember them under the gaslights of London to hear them spoken of here as failing in the true old time-honoured Tyrolese simplicity!

If our Scholastica cared more for money than for her inherited dignity of state and name, she might realise what people call a tidy sum by the sale of sundry heir-looms. There is, first, that gold chain and medal given to her great-grandfather by the lion-hearted queen. Put into the smelting-pot these would fetch something for weight alone. Then she has a fine old silver girdle, like coarse Indian work, which was the bride-girdle of the family, and worn by the brides from her great-grandmother's time and before. It is not a waist-belt, but one of those old-fashioned girdles that come round the hips, beautifully wrought, and with a fine old clasp whence depended a bunch of green ribbons that denoted the mistress of the house. She has also her peasant's silver necklace of fifteen chains, with the broad gold clasp—broader and bigger than a waist-buckle of olden times—set with jewels, and which she still wears on special feast-days:—all of which treasures are kept in an Indian box of lacker inlaid with mother-of-pearl and dating from many generations ago. These things she had been asked to sell times out of number, and might realise her own price for them if she would; but she always shakes her head and says 'Nein, nein,' and still keeps them as pleasant shows to her favoured guests. She has, besides, a drinking cup made out of a huge carved ibex-horn set in gold, and dating from the time when ibexes were to be found here—long long ago; and a silver spoon, fork and knife, whereof the handles are made after the fashion of a man and two women respectively. The knife is the man, the spoon and fork the women. These are kept in a case, and are not carried in the pocket as the peasantry are accustomed to carry theirs. They also came from the great-grandfather whom Maria Theresa honoured; so probably did that old carved wooden crucifix, with the ivory figure and ornamentation of inlaid mother-of-pearl, and the mysterious line all along the side which looks

as if it could be opened by those who know the trick for a relic to be hidden within. All these old-world things are interesting to us; and doubly so when found in an else unornamented and simple Tyrolese mountain home.

How old they are! Before the time when the road was made from the place where Maurach now is and then was not, along the side of the winding lake, and when all communication with Jenback, and by Jenback with Innsbruck and the lands beyond, was made for the first half of the way by means of a big ferry-boat in summer and by sledges on the ice in winter, going to the foot of the lake so many times in the month:—before the Achen-seehof was built on the spit of land that faces the woods and rocks of the Gaiser Alp, or the monastery at Pertisau had been denuded of its ecclesiastical treasures, deprived of its monastic character, and made into an inn like any other:—before the roof-raising of the Scholastica dependance—our pretty house standing on the close border of the lake—had been celebrated by that famous champagne supper whereat our usually silent host Johann Messner made a speech: before old Unnütz, or Good-for-nothing, had become a mountain lion to be climbed at all risks by tourists who had no particular business there and were not after the chamois:—before indeed these same chamois, our ‘gemsbock,’ had become as scarce as they now are, though now they are preserved, and then they were the property of all who were brave and agile enough to get them:—(with an opera-glass you may see them from the Gems Pavilion say, coming on to the snow of the heights opposite, and if you are patient and silent, and wait for them in the Oberau Valley on a still sweet summer night, you may watch them steal down timidly to the river to drink):—long before all these things, which now seem part of the natural condition of Scholastica and life as it is at Achensee, our Wirthin’s family held these treasures, which she shows with pleasant pride to us, English heretics as we are. In the early days of which I have been speaking no English heretics were hereabouts at all; and if there had been they would not have been suffered to see, still less handle, treasures to which a religious sentiment was attached. Used now to Protestant and Lutheran irreverence from both English and German tourists, whose money helps to make the winter living better though their souls are hopelessly lost, the Tyrolese peasant does not seek a quarrel with you because you do not doff your hat as you pass the sacred images set thick along the wayside, in the fields, and by the dwelling-houses. At some he himself stops and makes his prayer; but you, sitting quietly on the bench by the side, say in the Hinterauthal, are as

little molested as molesting. For all this, the priests have still supreme domination over the minds of the people, and are as bitter as they dare to be against the Protestants. The law protects their persons and property, but the church repudiates their souls; and should one unfortunately die in these remote parts the priests make the question of his last resting-place difficult and painful to his friends. Not an inch of consecrated ground will be assigned as the burial-place of one who, according to them, ought to be buried like a dog—than which indeed he is not much better in their eyes. And if, after infinite pain and trouble, a special bit of ground is bought, they surround the whole thing with degradations and small humiliations inexpressibly annoying and hard to bear. A priestly scandal of a very bad kind lies about the grave of an English gentleman who died and was buried at Achenkirchen about a year ago. As the matter is not settled yet, and the Protestant Society has taken it up while these words are being written, it is better not to give judgment on the case or to condemn only on hearsay; and taking things at their worst, they are not one whit more illiberal, more inhuman, or more unchristian than we have them in our own church, where a ‘conscientious’ clergyman abroad—heaven help him!—would rather have a Jew or a dissenter buried in the sea-sand—he also like a dog—than given a corner of the ground which the English colony have won after a hard fight from the Catholic government, but which is to be sacred only to those of the Established Church. The truth is, the church is the same everywhere, in every place, and under every denomination; and from the North American Indian medicine-man down to the Wesleyan prayer-leader, and through all the chain of orthodoxy in every direction, spiritual domination has always gone hand-in-hand with tyranny and oppression, and will to the last—for as long as it is permitted to exist.

It is not everyone whom Achensee would suit for a summer residence. The scenery is magnificent, but many would find it too severe, many too cold, and more too confined. When we first came, in the middle of June, the snow was thick on the mountains, filling the ravines and coming down in parts to the water’s edge; and even now, in August, patches are still left which it would not take an exceptionally good walker to reach—and where, let me say in a parenthesis, we found the splendid ‘*cyripedium calceolus*’ under the shadow of a small barberry tree, close to the snow—though they are disappearing daily under the joint influence of the sun which melts and the rain which more effectually washes them away. For the rest, the narrow valley is filled in for all its length

by the lake ; the mountains rising sheer on the western side, while on the eastern is only a narrow road, in parts hewn out of the living rock, and sometimes carried in piles over the lake ; though in other parts there are spaces of soft green moss rescued from the rocks, and bearing flowers, trees, and sweet herbage for the cattle. These little stretches of flower-full copse-wood are among the most beautiful passages in scenery where all is beautiful in its own way. And the flowers found there are so lovely ! On the opposite or western side the close-shut hills open out into the valley of Pertisau where are several fascinating walks ; but where at the inn the *régime* is even stricter and the living simpler than it is here. Only Catholics are held to exist in the world as Pertisau would have it ; and being only Catholics—the rest not counting—no meat is allowed on Fridays, and the fast-days, like the *festas*, are scrupulously kept. The power of the church, excessive, tyrannous, and the nurse of all superstition as it is throughout every country where it rules, and especially so in the Tyrol, has fuller sway than even elsewhere over the hamlet of Pertisau. The inn there was, as we have said, once a monastery, and still belongs to the monks who, as landlords, make their own terms and enforce them. The stricter kind of guests go from our Scholastica in fine weather to Pertisau on Fridays, to avoid the sin of meat and ensure the spiritual safety of fish only ; and the ‘Speisezimmer’ here is all the quieter for the exodus.

And speaking of the ‘Speisezimmer,’ we might as well say here as elsewhere what we have to say about our food. It is simple ; some would call it rough. Veal is our staple commodity ; roast chamois or ‘*Gemsenbraten*’ our delicacy ; ‘*Knödel*’ soup comes often, and we have no *ripieni* in the shape of fruit or extra vegetables. But all is good of its kind. The coffee and bread, the butter, the honey, and the milk, are to be commended ; the ‘*Schweinefleisch*,’ or pork, when it comes does not suggest trichinia ; and though a tourist has parodied the famous Welsh grace about rabbits, in the Guest-book of our Scholastica, saying that of veal or ‘*Kalbfleisch*’ he had had enough, it is neither ‘old’ nor ‘tough,’ and if in perpetuity as our *pièce de résistance* is also well fed and well flavoured.

For accommodation—the rooms are small in the old house, the Wirthshaus proper : but Zimmer Moidl, or Chamber Molly, keeps them as clean as her time will allow ; and those in the house on the lake are large and convenient. In the best two, one must be *exigeante* and dissatisfied indeed not to find sufficiency both of space and enjoyment. This, in which these pages are being written, looks out on a very paradise of beauty ; and even the rain, depressing

as it is, does not entirely spoil the view. The two eating-rooms here, one on the ground-floor for the casuals, and the other above for the permanents, are even more satisfactory, inasmuch as they have views two ways instead of one—down the lake as well as across. On a fine day the scene is simply enchantment; and in the worst weather one can walk under the covered verandahs which run round the house, both above and below, and keep dry. The lake up here at the head is as green as the Mediterranean is blue—green of that tender subtle kind which our artists are vainly trying to imitate, and our dyers to reproduce in stuffs. Seen against the light yellow-green of the fields towards Achenkirchen, when the sun shines across them so as to render them still more golden, the waters of our tranquil See are blue; against the sombre mountain, with its dark pine forest and jutting rocks of grey, it is green. Any way it is beautiful beyond words to describe or pigment to portray; and in the absolute calm of its best moments, or when caught in glimpses through the trees from the higher walks made along the mountain sides for timid visitors, conveys a sense of rest and beauty and poetry unsurpassable. Even that lovely stretch of lake-like sea within the Golden Shell—which reflects the reddened smoke of Vesuvius, and where the vineyards of Ischia and the myrtles of sweet Capri scent the air—even that is not more lovely, though so much more luscious, than is this beautiful lake of Achen in its stern and solemn setting of pine-clad mountain, where the snow lies even in summer, and where the eagles scream for joy when a chamois falls dead, and their young ones can be fed in the cave below.

Naturally, after the lake, the chief feature of the place lies in the walks—for those who can take them. Amusement else, there is none. We have no mules or donkeys or saddle horses here; and the drives are but two—down the lake so far as Maurach; no one would take the steep hill to Jenbach for pleasure; or on the Tegernsee road through Achenkirchen, and as far on to Achenwald as you have a mind to go. But the waterfalls and the Alp huts where the herdsmen and maidens bide in the summer with their cattle, make cheese and butter, and live for four months in hard work and rollick combined, the steep woods and the narrow valleys and up the practicable mountains, are only to be had by those who can walk—by those too who are not frightened at broad tracts of juicy bog and rich black mud; here a stretch of rough loose stones, there of closely intersected slippery tree-roots, with all the other incidents of mountain travel—including clouds of heavy sluggish stinging horseflies. But anyone who cares for wild flowers alone, not to speak of scenery, is rewarded. In the woods

you may gather in their season lilies of the valley, and pyrolas as beautiful and sweet as they, to almost any amount. Growing low at the foot of the trees, starring the soft moss in company with white strawberry blossoms, is that waxen greenhouse-looking 'single-flowered winter green,' the scent of which is even more luscious than that of the lily of the valley. The small salver-shaped bright blue '*Gentiana verna*' grows as low as the winter green, and is scarcely more conspicuous than a big 'bird's-eye;' but the larger kinds, the '*Gentiana acaulis*' and '*G. pneumanthe*,' are both richer in hue and more self-evident in growth. What a pleasure it was to find the first, there in that pretty little wood, where the bird's-eye primrose grew as thick as our daisies, and the pale, frosted edge-turned leaves of the graceful butterwort, both purple and white, were side by side with the yet more graceful '*mianthemum*.' Barberry trees with their dull-gold sprays are as plentiful as our blackberry bushes; the 'fly-honeysuckle,' with its two pale blossoms, takes the place of our native friend, and by the way is not half so sweet; what with us are rare orchids are to be found for the trouble of picking; and rare kinds of clematis—especially that great purple beauty the '*Clematis alpinum*'—are in company with patches of mountain avens, deep purple-black columbine, white monkshood, herb Paris, and the woody '*Polygala chamæbuxus*.' Acres of rhododendron flush the mountain sides rosy-red; and sometimes, but not often, that deep red single rose known to us as the 'Australian wild rose,' with its leaves almost as sweet as sweetbriar, grows among the ling and bilberry. Tracts of orange hawkweeds, mixed with the sulphur-coloured mouse-ear of more kinds than one, make the green sward golden; while alpine asters and huge ox-eye daisies, with their yellow brother, the '*inula*,' compete for the silver and gold of the local hue. The highway banks are covered with what looked at first sight only the light blue '*premorse scabious*,' but it was the '*globularia*' instead; and what with us would be grass fields are here one mass of flowers—flower-fields in real earnest, with no grass to speak of. It is to be supposed that they make good hay, else they would not be suffered to grow; but to our idea of things the yield looks doubtful. What would our Alderneys say to campanulas and pansies; large yellow rattles; umbelliferous flowers of undiscoverable species, but it is to be hoped nutritious qualities; to ox-eye daisies; tall yellow salsafy shutting up at noon and going off into its lovely seeding like fairy spindles or living crystals; to field scabious and big purple knapweed; small clustered pale field gentian, and every imaginable wild flower, in lieu of the sweet ripe grass of which we make our hay? Here however the

small thick-necked cattle thrive abundantly, though they have only this queer stuff for winter, while in the summer those kept for daily use are driven into the woods that adorn the mountain sides, where they pick up what they can get, and whence their bells go tinkling along the heights, making one of the pleasantest kinds of music to the listeners in the valley below.

From these walks we come home laden with flowers for our blue Flemish vases, ready to take our places among the rest, either at the midday dinner or the evening supper.

From the place to the people is a legitimate step, and Whom have we? is the question naturally following on What have we? Well, who are they all? For the most part, we are sorry to say, an uninteresting set enough, whatever their trades or professions. Fathers of families, with their wives and children, eating with their knives, picking their bones with their fingers, sprawling square on the table, and lighting their cigars while the guests last served are still waiting their turn, form the *couche* or background for the rest, and are by far the larger part of the company, whether permanent or temporary. They are respectable to their finger-tips; there is not a doubt about that; honest, well-meaning, loyal citizens enough; but refined? well-bred? with grace or cleanliness of manner? No! not as we English count grace or cleanliness of manner at table. But then we English are considered on the Continent to be too prim in our ways; too much tied and bound by the red-tape of conventionality for honest human life to grow in fitting freedom or luxuriance. And after all, it may be argued, manners are not so essential as morals, and it is better to be good than to be graceful. Only there is no reason why we should not be both—no reason why we should take our bones in our fingers and at times throw them down on the floor; as some among us here do; with other things even more inadmissible and nasty. The very peasants do no worse and no differently. But nasty as some of the guests undoubtedly are, they have their own notions of decency, and the fond mother opposite teaches her little son and daughter to put one hand over the other when they pick their teeth—which they do with a ferocity of earnestness worthy of a better cause, and with faces that irresistibly suggest the dentist and his forceps. Young couples make the company free of the fact of their new honeymoon by the undisguised manner in which they make love—holding hands under the table; leaning against each other, under the transparent pretext of lowered speech; an arm stolen round the waist, or a hearty kiss behind the door; with a general amount of ‘spooning’ which

passes unnoticed by their compatriots, but is thought odd and unseemly by ourselves. Sometimes a couple of young men, walking through the country with knapsacks and alpenstocks, are admitted to our table. In general these casuals are kept downstairs. Their ways are often reckless, and their toilette is always doubtful; here one hour and gone the next, they have neither characters to lose nor appearances to keep up, and they are without a sense of responsibility; and, truth to tell, heated, unwashed, unbrushed about the head and feet, and full of rollick and fun, they are not pleasant neighbours, as we find at rare times to our cost.

If we have unassuming simplicity, we can accept its accompanying vulgarity with less disquiet; but pretentiousness and coarseness in one? The combination is not lovely! That Somebody, for instance—his wife who boasts of her ‘noble’ blood to all who will listen to her, and says how differently ‘noble’ mothers bring up their daughters from others—and that daughter who thrusts herself, uninvited and unintroduced, into your society, asks you, point-blank, delicate questions which only long and close intimacy would warrant; stands listening to your conversation with others; makes eyes at the casuals, and flirts frankly with those who remain—that father, mother, and daughter all holding themselves as gold where everyone else is pewter, yet who are ruder and bolder and worse bred than the simplest of the confessed nobodies! The group is not complete without their friends, those three *nouvelles riches*, the handsome mother who is determined not to grow old, and her two daughters who are equally determined to make the best of their time, and to utilise their gifts of youth and good looks while they have them. Sailor hats, lined with red and set back from their faces like a Sussex bird-boy’s wide-awake, red umbrellas, and skirts tied back so tightly that their steps are only a few inches long, mark out these fair daughters of the successful *traiteur*; but the Somebody and his family have fraternised with the pretty *parvenues*, and the girls come into the ‘Speisezimmer’ wreathed in each other’s arms like so many schoolgirls acting *tableaux vivants*. The room has an echo. They all talk at the top of their voices together—no one waiting for the other, but each trying to talk the rest down; a child of two years old, who lives at the public table and sits up till ten o’clock at night, screams with laughter when it does not shriek with anger, and the Babel where they sit makes it impossible for us at the other end of the table to hear each other speak.

Very different are our friends at this other end. A stately, low-voiced graceful woman, who looks as if she had seen much sorrow, but whose fine face has even a nobler cast because of its suffering—

a woman with that indescribable air of good-breeding which marks the well-born and well-educated—talks in her sweet voice to her handsome daughter, as well-bred as herself, but full of strength and energy and the unworn vitality of youth, where this other is subdued to the patient resignation of one whose life lies behind her, and whose sunshine now is the ‘afterglow,’ not the full meridian. These two sweet women redeem the rest, and renew our faith in the possibility of refinement in a Tyrolese ‘mountain-house’; which else—we not knowing the country, and naturally taking what we see here as a fair sample of the rest—would have lost. They speak English, too; have pleasant things to say of our own Princess Alice—they are from Hesse-Darmstadt themselves, and often at the Court—and are in every way delightful companions, clever, and refreshingly well-bred.

That half-Italian, half-German professor, ‘mescolato’ he calls himself, is a friend of theirs; he with the keen Florentine face, short cropped hair, bright burning eyes, a manner full of nervous energy, but also of nervous irritability, quick to feel, to see, to understand, and with a range of knowledge almost encyclopædic. There is not a subject whereon he has not something interesting to say, and the information for which you ask you are sure to receive. Side by side with these are the lively, anecdotal, artistic Colonel and his fair-haired wife; both general favourites, as they well may be, and as was partly proved by the manner in which she was fêted with wreaths and bouquets on her ‘name-day,’ and by the smiles and pleasure with which they are greeted when they appear. Then there is the Herr Baron, tall, strong, powerful, handsome, like a Ritter of olden times, and looking as if he well knew how to command—a splendid figure for a suit of armour, and a man with whom it would be dangerous to take a liberty. His two daughters are jewels that bear examination; and ‘la Baronessa Margherita’ is everyone’s delight. ‘His Excellency’ with ‘Her’ kind bright-eyed ‘Excellency’ belong to our table, and have a good word for and from everybody. So have those two Viennese, the good-natured Herr with his as good-natured Frau who, stout and sonsy as she is, is such a brave mountaineer; as good indeed as our young Hesse-Darmstadt favourite. She is clever, but she could not keep the poor young eagle alive. The poor young eagle! which was brought into our Scholastica by two wayfarers who had found it gasping on the rocks, evidently hurt to its death. It was a handsome thing, poor beast, but its death was a relief. These are by far the pleasantest and most interesting people here—the only Germans, indeed, with whom we feel inclined to fraternise; and they keep themselves as free from close intercourse

with their fellow-countrymen as we. That Innsbruck family, for instance—they are good-natured and kindly, a douce, affectionate, homely set of people, whose love for each other it is pleasant to watch; but their manners at table are simply barbarous, and we could not knit up a friendship with people who set one's teeth on edge at every turn.

Our own English colony is restricted, but singularly pleasant. The pretty fair-faced widow, with her two nice daughters, are charming. When she sings her Scottish songs, as she does with the prettiest accent in the world, we forget that we are in the Tyrol, and are transported back to England where dear 'Aunt Janet' also sings the same songs and repeats the audacious lies of the guid wife who wanted to palm off a pair of buits on her husband as a couple of watter stoups, and a riding horse as a milch cow. They, and the kind-hearted Englishman, with the frank-mannered German wife—the 'writing woman' in spectacles, and her sweet young companion with the big eyes and the bright curly hair—are the only Britons here; but they fraternise as compatriots should; take walks together and shake hands, lend each other books, speak the English tongue, and refrain from reviling 'foreigners.'

Every now and then indeed stray fellow-countrymen wander past. A couple of young Englishmen, who have not a word of German between them, and who hope to make their way by the language of gulden and pantomime combined, first send the coachman nearly mad by asking, 'How long do you stay here?' and think him a low idiot because he neither answers nor understands, or because he answers and they do not understand—and then come straggling into the 'Speisezimmer.' 'Please give us some bread and butter as soon as you can,' they say confidently to Agnese; who sharp as she is, cannot quite make out what they meant. 'Essen?' she asks; 'Bread and butter' they answer. She betakes herself to an interpreter, who repeats the words in the German fashion. 'I said bread and butter,' says the younger of the two, with an injured air. 'What duffers they are!' Sometimes a young couple, evidently just married, but not making open love like their German friends, are stranded for want of knowing not the court tongue but the native—not German pure and simple, but the Tyrolese patois. Then our English friend who has made Achensee his summer home for many years, and who is as well known here as our Scholastica herself, good-naturedly comes forward as an interpreter and settles the question of the carriage and the luggage without delay.

But in general the English know nothing of Scholastica, and

the *habitués* devoutly hope that this ignorance will continue, and that the comparative retirement and simplicity of the place will not be spoilt by an influx of vulgar wealth or fastidious luxury. We do not want either wealth or luxury here. We are content with our carpetless floors; and for three-ply snow-white damask admire our table covers of light grey oil-cloth which at least can be kept clean. We do not want smart men servants to hand our Knödel soup and roast veal, our cranberry jam to eat with it, together with sauerkraut and mashed potatoes, *secundum artem*; have we not bright little Agnese, good steady Moidl, and Anna of the round red cheeks and ready smile—fat, broad, fair-haired Anna, like a big Dutch doll more than anything else, and whom some of us call ‘coquelicot’? In the common room over the way, at the Wirthshaus, where the young men of the place congregate, is there not to wait on them and keep them in order another brave strong strapping Moidl? Not a lass this one, but a widow, poor thing, with three sons and a crinoline. We have four Moidls or Mollys in the establishment—dear good Zimmer or Chamber Moidl, who attends to the bedrooms and waits at table; Zucker Moidl, who cuts up the sugar; Kellner Moidl, the widow aforesaid; and Feld Moidl, who works in the fields. They all seem to enjoy their summer, and are always obliging, smiling, and at hand; and if there is much to do, there is more to get; and the liking for bustle and excitement grows with the use and makes hard work light.

A few days since quite a panic seized the establishment. The church at Eben at the foot of the lake is votive, and was rich. Somebody got in, robbed the Sacred Image of all her jewelry and finery to the amount of twenty thousand marks, say some—of five thousand gulden (500*l.*), say others. He even broke off one of her hands in his unholy greed; and when he had filled his pockets, he swung himself safe to earth by means of the belfry ropes, and so got clear away. Such a thing in pious Catholic Tyrol was scarce ever heard of before; and the dread and terror which it inspired may easily be imagined. Not a few fear that the outraged saint will visit the sins of the guilty on the innocent; and more have a thought of their own locks and keys, and wonder if their treasures will be safe to-night where such daring rascaldom as this is about. A caravan of gipsies too foretells probable losses in the hen-roost and the hanging linen; but our good Scholastica, kind soul! gives a warm soup and a bit of bread to each hungry passer-by, and that evil-faced old woman shares with the rest. By the bye, that evil-faced old woman may be, who knows? a certain ‘Toni’ who once inspired a friend of ours with a poetic

passion when time was young with both, and he had more imagination than judgment. It is not pleasant to believe; but it may have been; and those of us who know the story look at her curiously, and wonder if she could ever have been beautiful, young, innocent, and suggestive of lovely images and tender thoughts. Be that as it may, however, when we go for a long walk Zimmer Moidl locks our room-door, and puts the key in her pocket. The house is thronged with casuals; there is tramping and running and confusion and bustle; and all white hands are not clean-fingered, while some are eminently slippery. But we do not fear by night or by day; and some of us sleep with tranquil minds on the ground-floor quite unguarded, and dream, undisturbed by anything more distressing than the uncomfortable locomotive power possessed by the feather bed-cover, which *à propos* of nothing so often walks off on to the floor at night, leaving us shivering and denuded.

And now the weather clears. The clouds lift themselves from the mountain tops and hang like dazzling masses of statuary marble in the bright blue sky; the mists clear away though they still lie in the hollows, marking out independent peaks and crags which the sunshine melts into one unbroken surface. The lake becomes as calm and still as if made of glass, and the ripple, scarcely marked at all, runs the right way; the cattle bells tinkle musically in the distance; the swallows skim now high now low, and the sunshine shows their white breasts like glancing silver; the birds sing and twitter in the wood; the eagles scream high over head; the unseen sunset tinges the mountain tops with the glorious dyes of the evening glow; and the handsome peasant lad from far beyond the Brenner begins his wild love-plaint on the zither, while we all stand round and listen; and some of us—remember.

A Ballad of Heroes.

‘Now all your victories are in vain.’*

BECAUSE you passed, and now are not,—
 Because in some remoter day
 Your sacred dust in doubtful spot
 Was blown of ancient airs away,—
 Because you perished,—must men say
 Your deeds were naught, and so profane
 Your lives with that cold burden? Nay,
 The deeds you wrought are not in vain!

Though it may be, above the plot
 That hid your once imperial clay,
 No greener than o’er men forgot
 The unregarding grasses sway;—
 Though there no sweeter is the lay
 Of careless bird,—though you remain
 Without distinction of decay,—
 The deeds you wrought are not in vain!

No. For while yet in tower or cot
 Your story stirs the pulses’ play;
 And men forget the sordid lot—
 The sordid cares—of cities gray;
 While yet they grow, for homelier fray,
 More strong from you, as reading plain
 That Life may go, if Honour stay,—
 The deeds you wrought are not in vain!

ENVOY.

HEROES of old! I humbly lay
 The laurel on your graves again;
 Whatever men have done, men may,—
 The deeds you wrought are not in vain.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

* See a ‘Ballad of Heroes,’ with this refrain, in the charming ‘Handful of Honey-suckle,’ by A. Mary F. Robinson, 1878.

A Mafair Mysterp.

BY JAMES PAYN.

I.

INVITATION.

THERE are great people and great people in London. If any honest folks from the country should chance to pass Mrs. Patterini's door in Evelyn Lodge on any afternoon in the season, when that lady's splendid equipage is stopping the way there, and through the open portal should behold the powdered footmen who await her coming, they would doubtless think Mrs. Patterini a very great personage indeed; much greater than Mrs. Marmaduke Eyre next door, for example, whose neat little unpretentious brougham is cast into the shade by Mrs. P.'s magnificent vehicle, and whose footman wears not even a shoulder-knot. Yet Mrs. P. would give her ears—or at least her diamond earrings—to get an inclination of the head from the other lady, who unhappily has no inclination for her. There is nothing whatever against the character of Mrs. Patterini; she is fit to be Cæsar's wife, so far as any breath of personal scandal is concerned; and if she is not Cæsar's, she is the wife of a man who has probably as much money as that historical personage ever had, and is, in his way, as powerful. With a stamp (not of his foot—he makes not the least noise about it) he can raise legions. Don Carlos would kiss him on both cheeks to-morrow and give him all sorts of titles merely for his autograph; even the Comte de Chambord might think it worth while to give him his forefinger, in token of a legitimate friendship, in return for the same favour; and I do not think the Pope himself would hesitate to say a good word for him in certain quarters in return for his heretical assistance. Indeed, for assisting some struggling sovereign—or half sovereign—Mr. Patterini did once acquire a patent of nobility, which he has been known to exhibit to confidential friends in his smoking-room, and is entitled, he has assured them, to write himself Baron. Baron and Baroness Patterini! can anything have a finer or more harmonious sound? And yet, for the life of her, Mrs. P. dare not call herself Baroness. People are so ill-natured, that they will be sure to say dear Anthony—the good man's name is Anthony—procured it in some infamous manner; took ten per cent. off his commission upon the Monaco loan, perhaps; whereas, as everybody knows, a real nobleman is constructed in quite a dif-

ferent manner. He must be a gentleman first (though this is not absolutely indispensable); then he must have an estate in some county, and represent it in Parliament after a contested election; and even then, unless he 'rats' at a political crisis, when the thing is often done at once, it is a tedious affair to get ennobled. It was the more to be regretted that such steps should be necessary, for the name of Patterini seemed to its female owner singularly adapted for a noble prefix; the word Mrs. in connection with it appeared to her a waste, a bathos, like a handle of bone prefixed to a silk parasol; it had a certain Norman ring about it, and even if it was Greek (as was the fact), the modern Greeks, as Cyril Clarke assured her, resemble in their predatory habits the ancient Normans. Mrs. Patterini did not know what 'predatory' meant, and she was quite satisfied with the assertion. She had the utmost confidence in Mr. Cyril Clarke as a gentleman and a gentile; for both those classes, to say the truth, were, among her immediate acquaintances, rather scarce. He was a barrister, a 'rising' one he called himself, but upon cross-examination would admit frankly that he only meant a young barrister—rising twenty-six. He was handsome, intelligent, and sprightly, but the attorneys had not fallen in love with him, nor had he fallen in love with an attorney's daughter. He had fallen in love with Miss Myra Patterini, who by rights should have been a Baroness like her mother, for one of the great charms of a foreign title is that it descends and spreads, so that one's whole stock is glorified, and one begets, not boys and girls, like the common herd of parents, but Barons and Baronesses.

Any thing more ludicrous than Mr. Cyril Clarke's pretensions to this young lady's hand it would have been difficult to conceive. His family, though respectable enough—his father was a minor canon of some cathedral or another, and had a living in the Fens—were by no means Norman; he had not a shilling in the world—that is to say, judged by an Evelyn Lodge standard; he had in reality an allowance of £250 a year, paid quarterly by his papa, and how he managed to clothe himself in the way he did, and smoke such excellent cigars, was a marvel except to those who knew that he paid nobody except the bankers of his club on the 1st of January. He was not a poet nor a novelist; he had discovered no new religion nor any flaws in the old ones. He had no distinction of any kind which could be supposed by the most charitable to bridge over the great gulf that lay between him and Miss Myra. And yet he dared to love her, and one of her parents knew it. Of course it was the female one. Patterini père knew nothing except the share list, British and foreign, and which of the

great City houses was 'shaky'—a piece of intelligence he always managed to acquire in time to prevent it shaking *him*. One thing more he knew—that under no circumstances whatsoever was he to interfere with the plans of Mrs. Patterini; his privilege was confined to paying for their execution. To look at him you would say he was the honestest man, I do not say in Greece, but in England. And far be it from me to hint that he was not honest. He looked like a highly respectable grazier, whose talk should have been of beeves when it was not of repairing his parish church, situated in a pastoral district. He had not only the air of a churchwarden, but of the parson's own churchwarden. The keys which he was wont to rattle in his pocket when taking his wife's orders might have belonged to the vestry, instead of fitting desks full of mysterious documents, with seals and stamps upon them—mostly foreign—that represented tens of thousands of pounds.

He rather liked Cyril Clarke, and was pleasurably surprised that the young man had never asked him to lend him money. His calling was that of a lender, and nothing had yet occurred to him in the semblance of friendship with needy men that had not sooner or later taken that professional term. He had done several 'smart' things—a term used in the City for benevolent actions—to such persons during his commercial career, and would have been very willing to have given Cyril Clarke a hundred or two for the asking. If he had asked for his daughter, he would not have been angry, but would probably have offered to provide for him for life in a first-class lunatic asylum.

The Baroness, as I am afraid the young barrister was wont to call his hostess in the family circle, had even a higher ambition with respect to the disposal of her daughter's hand than her husband, and yet she permitted this young man to pay her Myra marked attentions. Nothing serious could possibly come of it, and Cyril was extremely useful to her, and could be retained by no other sort of fee. He was a pleasant, agreeable young fellow, and 'knew everybody.' He brought people—chiefly males, however—to Evelyn Lodge who would never have come thither of their own accord, and he relieved the otherwise insufferable tedium of her dinner parties.

There are three classes of society in London each of whom 'entertain' in a magnificent fashion: the aristocracy, whose reunions are sometimes lively, but more generally dull; the Bohemian rich (a small body, who despise convention, and gather around them all those who have talent to recommend them, though it is essential that their lady guests, at least, should be of good character); and the millionaires. These last, of course, can give you every-

thing that money can buy ; but 'good company' not being in the market, is rarely found under their roof. The table groans with delicacies, but the guest, if he likes to be amused as well as fed, groans also. When you have been told in a stage whisper that your next neighbour has four hundred thousand pounds, and that the man opposite has made a hundred thousand by 'an operation' upon Turks (by which is indicated the Turkish Loan), there is little else to learn. The old gentlemen are mere walking money-bags ; they chink, but cannot converse. The young ones are hateful imitations of the real 'gilt youth' of the aristocracy, and disgust as well as bore one. The ladies—well, the ladies are not nice. They are mostly very 'fine women.' I have an idea that their husbands buy them by weight. But they are not good-natured, as all fat people are bound to be. To dine, in short, at Evelyn Lodge was a social martyrdom. The glare of the women's diamonds and of the men's studs ; the glare of the gold plate ; the enormous length of the entertainment, and the extreme tenuity of the small-talk ; the stoutness of the people ; their large noses ; the absence of the letter *h*, and the substitution of the letter *b* for the letter *p*—the moral and material oppression caused by all this splendid vulgarity was overwhelming. Now, the Baroness was sagacious enough to perceive this ; she remarked that when Cyril Clarke was present the heavy atmosphere lifted a little, that where he sat there was an oasis in this desert of dulness where laughter rippled. In time he grew to be indispensable. She had wit enough to see that he did not like it, that rich wines and a fine feast were not sufficient attractions to a man of his stamp, that he came, in short, after Myra ; and yet the Baroness encouraged him. If she discarded him, the men he had brought to the Lodge, and who leavened her parties so pleasantly, would in all likelihood go away, and everything would be as it used to be—as dull as ditch-water. Moreover, she did not give up all hope of getting into society—real society—through Cyril's good offices. He had procured invitations for Myra for a ball or two at houses of undoubted fashion, and the girl had attended them under the escort of a great lady, whose footman had left her card at the Lodge. But these fashionable doors had never been opened for the Baroness herself, and to her they were the gates of paradise.

To have had a square card from the Duchess of Doldrum, requesting the pleasure of Mr., Mrs., and Miss Patterini's company at Doldrum House, she would have sacrificed half her fortune ; to have procured her Grace's presence under her own roof, she would have bartered her hopes of heaven.

She had left no stone unturned to 'get into society ;' she had

taken a house at Ascot every season, and thrown it open during the race week ; she had actually ventured upon having outriders to her carriage—a distinction reserved by tacit consent for royalty and Lady Blanche Mildew—but had only got laughed at for her pains. Once she had been upon the very brink of bliss. Cyril Clarke had somehow arranged for her to be presented at Court ; it was to cost a thousand pounds ‘in fees, &c.,’ none of which, it is fair to say, was to go into *his* pocket. She would have been quite content to pay the money had it been twice as much. But at the very last moment the affair broke down, and ended in a very ill-natured paragraph in the *Court Intelligencer*.

Myra was not very pretty nor very distinguished-looking, but she was a good-looking, intelligent girl—evidently a well-to-do grazier’s daughter—and would have found no difficulty in getting a fitting mate, had she not had £25,000 of her own, and been heiress to as much per annum. This made it very difficult. No one who was in a social position to merit such a prize made any advances ; the score or two of young gentlemen who did were ‘not to be thought of,’ as her mother said. I am afraid, however, Myra did think of one of them.

‘If I could only get my mother’s consent, Cyril, I would marry you to-morrow,’ she had told the young barrister ; ‘but you know that that is impossible. I will never marry you without it, so you had much better cease your visits to the Lodge, which only give me unnecessary pain.’

She was a very sensible girl, who saw through her mother’s weakness for fashionable life, and despised it ; but she had honest scruples. I am afraid Mr. Cyril Clarke did not share them. He thoroughly understood his position at the Lodge, and resented the Baroness’s treatment of him, as any man of spirit would have done ; but he loved Myra quite independently of her fortune—although he was not one to despise fortune—and he persevered in his attentions. I shall make no apologies for what he afterwards did, for it was indefensible ; but I must say that there were excuses for him.

A few years ago it was noised abroad that a great Eastern potentate, the Shah of Persia, was about to visit England. Cyril Clarke brought the news, twenty-four hours before it was published in the papers, to Evelyn Lodge : one of his missions was to bring the Baroness early intelligence of all fashionable movements, and he was very skilled in acquiring it. But these particular tidings he had learned from a friend of his in the Foreign Office under peculiar circumstances. This gentleman had at one time resided in Persia, and could speak its tongue, and he had been sounded

by the chief of his department that very morning as to whether, in case his Imperial Majesty the Shah should come, he would be attached to his sacred person while in England. News of this kind was meat, drink, and clothing to the Baroness.

'My dear Cyril,' said she, 'you are invaluable, and you will find Myra in the conservatory.'

She knew that a squeeze of her daughter's hand would repay him for all his trouble in pumping the Foreign Office clerk, as indeed it did.

Her twenty-four hours' start of the newspapers gave the Baroness quite a reputation, and would have made her very happy had the public she enlightened by it been other than of her own class; but she was already one of its chiefs, and little cared for such supremacy. As time went on, and the tidings came to be common property, she envied Baron Reuter, at whose instance the Shah was said to have determined upon his Western journey, above everybody. If she could only get his Imperial Highness to take any notice of *her*, that would be bliss indeed, and Mr. Cyril Clarke actually gave her hopes of it. He thought it not impossible that through his friend in the Foreign Office the Shah might be induced to believe that Evelyn Lodge was one of the centres of financial greatness, and that, as such, it was worth his while to visit it; the Persian Loan would certainly be all the better for the backing of Patterini and Company, while at Patterini's mansion his Imperial Majesty would have the opportunity of beholding a type of social life in financial circles.

Cyril broke this gorgeous project to his patroness with extreme caution, lest the vision of greatness thus disclosed should be too much for her, and his prudence was not misplaced.

She did not, however, faint, but she cried like a child, and wobbled all over like a jelly.

'If you do it, Cyril,' gasped she—'if you bring his Imperial Highness the Shah of Persia beneath my humble roof, there is nothing—*nothing* that I can deny you. You have only to name your reward.'

'Myra!' said Cyril, with his usual presence of mind.

The Baroness turned pale and swallowed something in her throat; but she was not one to go back from her word.

'If the Shah comes here,' said she, 'you shall have Myra.'

II.

DUBITATION.

THE excitement caused in London by the arrival of the Shah of Persia was greater than that produced by any other event since the visit of the allied monarchs after Waterloo. Indeed, in some respects it exceeded that, for the element of wonder and romance was wanting in the latter case. Moreover, the personal appearance of the Eastern despot was itself attractive. A king in military uniform looks, after all, but like any other general officer; but his Majesty of Persia was in his apparel, at least, all that could be expected of such a potentate. His frame and face, it is true, reminded our Indian officers so strongly of a low-caste native servant that it is said they felt scruples in paying him due honour; but he gleamed with diamonds and precious stones, rode a horse with a painted tail, and was evidently a person of distinction. The way the little wretch was worshipped in my native land is a subject I must decline to dwell upon; it was humiliating to human nature. He was dirty, I have no doubt, but he looked much worse than what is implied by that moderate adjective; he ate like a savage and spilled his food like a baby; and wherever a young person of title (and he saw few others) took his fancy, he generally made an offer, if single, to her father, if married, to her husband, to buy her. But he was 'the rage' for all that, and ladies of fashion were dying to make him their guest even for half an hour. The Lord Chamberlain (through whom alone he was accessible) was importuned as he had never been before to grant a share of his company to my Lady This and my Lady That. If his Imperial Majesty could not come to dine with her, could he not come to lunch? and if not to lunch, could he not come to five-o'clock tea? The Lord Chamberlain 'consigned' him to this great house and that, and very proud was the consignee when the precious article came to hand on loan. I think the happiest day of Mrs. Patterini's existence was that on which the *Morning Post* announced that his Majesty the Shah of Persia would honour her reception at Evelyn Lodge on Tuesday next with his Imperial presence.

From her point of view she well might be so, for his promised visit had broken down the barriers between herself and the highest in the land. I do not know how much she paid to procure the honour, or in what proportions the bribe was divided between the gentlemen in the Foreign Office and the ministers of the Shah, but I have heard that the expenses of the entertainment itself were as nothing compared with what the acceptance of the invitation cost. The

ball, however, must have cost something ; for in the first place the Baroness 'threw out' the drawing-room so as to extend half over the garden, and in the second she drove archways through all the partition walls, so that the whole floor should be *en suite*. But what were a few trifling alterations in Evelyn Lodge when taken in connection with the alteration in the feelings of good society as respected its mistress ? It is scarcely too much to say that for a whole week there was no woman in London more 'sought after' than the Baroness Patterini. She adopted her rightful title on the instant, and issued her cards of invitation with a baron's coronet embossed upon them in blue and silver. So far from there being any doubt of filling her largely increased ball-room, her only difficulty was to say 'No' to those of her own personal acquaintances whose *h*'s were too pronounced (or unpronounced), and whose *p*'s were too obviously *b*'s. The whole fashionable world was at her feet. Ladies of title (English) intrigued for an invitation ; the Duchess of Doldrum signified, through a certain lady, herself of distinction, that she would come if she were asked. Her future hostess talked of her from that moment as her 'dear Duchess'—a term which had more truth in it than her friends imagined who had not seen Mr. Patterini's cheque (drawn 'to bearer,' you may be sure), which Cyril Clarke had disposed of in the proper quarters. Not a shilling of it had soiled his hands, though, if trouble be worth payment, he deserved all that could have been given him. He worked like a slave (Persian), and passed his days between Buckingham Palace, where H.I.M. was located, and the Lord Chamberlain's office. For the fact is, that the august sovereign of Persia was every bit as slippery as he looked. His word was never to be depended on, though at that time there were some people who believed in his bonds ; and he did not know his own mind—and no wonder : for it was not to be detected by the microscope—for two hours together. It was true he had promised, or his chief minister and chibouk-carrier had promised for him, that he would be at Evelyn Lodge on Tuesday ; but rumours were flying about that he proposed to quit England earlier than he had intended, and indeed on that very day. The mere report caused tortures to the Baroness, and (what was very rare) made her lose her temper.

'Cyril, have you seen *this* ?' cried she, pointing to the paragraph in the morning paper which stated that, in consequence of a special despatch from Ispahan, it was more than probable his Imperial Majesty would be compelled to leave the shores of England on the ensuing Tuesday. 'Is it possible it can be true ?'

'Of course it is possible, Baroness ; but I do not believe it. I have done everything——'

‘I don’t care *what* you have done,’ cried the infuriated woman; ‘but if this villain’—so she spoke of her expected Imperial guest—‘should break his word to me, after all, mind, I break mine to you. You, penniless adventurer that you are, shall never marry Myra.’

If it were possible for such a very handsome young fellow as Mr. Cyril Clarke to look ugly, such was the expression of his countenance at this speech; but he instantly recovered his good looks, and bowed profoundly. It is a very foolish thing in a vulgar person to take advantage of a gentleman’s necessities to insult him. The successful Black should be careful not to make the White man dangerous.

‘I didn’t mean to say anything offensive, Cyril,’ continued the Baroness, whose native sagacity had returned to her; ‘but the fact is, I scarcely know what I say. The bare idea of that odious monster throwing us over at the last moment almost deprives me of my senses. I positively believe everything that has been said against him—about his smothering people in blankets and sawing them asunder—and about his nine hundred and ninety-nine wives.’

‘I believe them all,’ said Cyril, coolly. ‘I hope you won’t let him have Myra for the thousandth, if he should happen to ask you.’

‘Upon my word, I won’t,’ said the Baroness earnestly, yet in a manner that convinced him that the idea was not a novelty to her. ‘She is of age, and of course, therefore, her own mistress; but you know on which side my influence would be exerted, Cyril. Indeed, I look upon her, if all goes well, as engaged to yourself.’

‘And the Baron?’ demanded Cyril.

‘The Baron’s views are my views!’ answered the lady, in the tone of M. Auguste Comte when addressing his disciples: it was the whole science of Positivism in a single sentence.

On the day before the ball Cyril received formal news, while breakfasting at Evelyn Lodge, that the Shah’s appointment would be kept, and in her ecstasy the Baroness kissed him.

‘You are a duck and a darling,’ exclaimed she; ‘and I don’t wonder that our Myra is devoted to you. I look upon you from this moment as our son-in-law.’

Under these circumstances I think Mr. Cyril Clarke was justified in ratifying the agreement by kissing Myra. It was the first time he had ventured upon it—in public—and the young lady playfully remonstrated with him.

‘Remember, sir, the Shah has not come yet.’

‘Pshaw!’ answered Cyril; ‘he is as safe as the Bank.’

‘I don’t quite agree with you *there*,’ said the Baron, looking up

from the newspaper in which he was studying the prospects of the Persian Loan.

‘Cyril means he is safe to come to-morrow night,’ observed the Baroness in explanation. ‘To tell you the honest truth, my dear,’ continued she, with frankness, ‘if he had not come, I think it would have been the death of me. When he has once been, I don’t care what happens. Persia may burst up, and the Shah be bow-stringed on Wednesday morning; but he will, so to speak, have consecrated Evelyn Lodge for ever, and the Duchess *must* ask us back again to Doldrum House.’

The preparations for the ball, which included a *fête* in so much of the garden as the throwing out of the ball-room had spared, were completed in ample time. A whole army of workpeople had occupied the house for days, and absolutely nothing was omitted which could insure the success of an entertainment which the fashionable papers had described beforehand as of ‘unique magnificence;’ and yet the Baroness was consumed with anxiety lest there should be a screw loose, the least screw anywhere. The greatness of the occasion was too supreme for positive enjoyment. She wished in her heart—as a hostess generally does in similar circumstances—that the whole thing was over, and that she might begin to talk about it. ‘Would it were supper-time and all were well!’ is an aspiration that most persons in her position are prone to echo; only in her case the supper itself was a difficulty, because no one could give her any certain information as to what his Imperial Majesty liked in the way of food, or how he chose to eat it, except that he used his Imperial fingers instead of a fork. A little table was put apart for him, just as one is placed for conjurers at juvenile entertainments, and everything rich and rare that earth and air could furnish was provided to tempt his Imperial palate. Some wicked wags (friends, I am sorry to say, of Cyril’s) had suggested that nautch girls were indispensable to dance before him as he sat at table; and the Baroness would have taken the matter into her serious consideration, and had the whole *corps de ballet* from the Italian Opera, had it not been for Cyril. There was also a question whether he *did* sit at table; and a pile of Persian carpets was kept in readiness, in case it should be found that he could not be comfortable in a chair.

‘Can’t sit in a chair!’ exclaimed the Baron, to whom this piece of information was vouchsafed on that eventful morning. ‘Ah, that comes of putting him on horseback at the review, I suppose.’

‘My dear Baron, you are ridiculously ignorant,’ said the lady. ‘Don’t you know that Persians never sit down at home—that is, except cross-legged?’

'Bless my soul!' said the Baron. For the first time he had begun to entertain a ray of interest in their expected guest. 'Fancy a fellow with his legs crossed—like a chequer!'

At that moment a telegram—he used to have one about every half-hour—arrived for Cyril.

'What is it about?' asked the Baroness excitedly. 'You look annoyed. Nothing has happened, I do hope!' and she held out her hand for the missive.

But Cyril had already torn it up into small pieces. 'It seems,' said he, 'that chibouks must be provided for the Shah and all his suite.'

'What does that matter? What are chibouks? Do you mean to say they can't be got?'

The Baroness had dreadful suspicions that they were animals peculiar to Persia, sacred to the sovereign, and without which he never moved, like white elephants in Burmah.

'They are only Eastern pipes,' laughed Cyril.

'Then send for five-and-forty of the best that can be procured,' said the Baroness. 'Why on earth should that annoy you, Cyril? Upon my word, you looked so queer that it gave me quite a turn.'

'Well, these Persian fellows are a dirty lot, you know, as Jack remarks' (Jack was Jack Delayne, in the Foreign Office, who had sent the telegram), 'and I was thinking that they'd spoil your new carpet.'

'Carpet!' echoed the Baroness scornfully; 'what signifies about the carpet?'

'I suppose I had better not come home to dinner to-day, my dear,' remarked the Baron mildly, as he rose from his chair.

'Dinner!' repeated she, with even greater scorn. 'The idea of a man thinking of his dinner who has got the Shah of Persia coming to sup with him!'

For a few minutes afterwards Cyril and his beloved object were left alone in the conservatory together.

'Cyril,' said she, 'you have not deceived *me*; you would never have changed colour if that telegram had been only about the chibouks. What *was* it about?'

He whispered something in her ear which made her turn as pale as the camellias among which they stood; she tottered, and would have fallen; and as there was nowhere for her to fall except upon the tessellated pavement, Cyril considerably opened his arms, and she fell into them.

'Oh, my gracious goodness!' were her first words. It would be a breach of confidence to repeat the conversation further, which

was carried on in tender murmurs. Suffice it to record its conclusion.

‘You are quite, *quite* sure, Cyril darling, that the man will come?’

‘I will lay my life upon it, sweetest. Your dear mother shall not be disappointed so far.’

III.

DELECTATION.

THE day of our Baroness’s delight only began to dawn after it had been long over for the majority of her fellow-creatures. The Shah was not expected at Evelyn Lodge till eleven o’clock P.M., and his movements were so erratic that he might not make his appearance till even a yet later hour. Long before eleven o’clock, however, and indeed immediately after the time named in the invitation for the ball, Evelyn Lodge was thronged with rank and fashion. The Baron and Baroness stood to receive their company on either side of the ball-room door, which opened upon the great hall; the former behaved like a well constructed automaton; his head inclined, his lips parted with a smile, he put out his hand and arm like a pump-handle at every arrival. The lady, on the other hand, had, it was evident, her heart in the matter; she had a gracious look and a pleasant word (pretty much the same look and the same word, it must be owned, however) for everybody; but when anybody very magnificent was announced—on the arrival of the Duchess of Doldrum, for example—she advanced a step over the threshold, beckoning with an imperious gesture her lord and master to do the like. This latter manœuvre was repeated about twenty times; the ordinary welcome movements about eight hundred. So the papers had not been far wrong in predicting that there would be a thousand persons of rank and fashion at Evelyn Lodge that night, including many of very eminent distinction; there were even rumours of the presence of a royal duke (the circulation of which, between ourselves, cost the Baroness a pretty penny), but that was merely a little garnish to the affair. Her Imperial guest, as she delighted to call him, was an attraction that could afford to be independent of all others.

In the mean time Cyril Clarke and some of his trusty friends did their very best to set things going; the music struck up, and a few languid dances were got through; but there was a sense of expectation upon all the company that dulled it and forbade enjoyment. They could dance and eat and drink and go to a garden *fête* any day of the week; but they had come to Evelyn Lodge to

meet the Shah of Persia. At a quarter past eleven the last guest of the Patterinis had arrived, except the one for whom all eyes were straining, all ears upon the stretch. The Baroness sent for Cyril, and suggested that a messenger should be despatched to Buckingham Palace to inquire the cause of the delay.

'That would be madness,' was his reply; 'to be hurried would be intolerable to his Imperial Majesty. He would probably cut the messenger's head off.'

The Baroness would not have minded *that* if he would only have started for Evelyn Lodge immediately afterwards, and it was with some difficulty that she refrained from saying so.

However, she had not much longer to wait. There was a clatter of hoofs at the house door greater than any that had preceded it, and a wild cheer broke forth from the crowd assembled without.

At last the Shah had come.

Through the long hall of marble, between the banks of flowers and the rows of statues, the Baroness could perceive his dusky Majesty coming slowly towards her, followed by the officers of his household. On one side of him, but a little behind, walked Jack Delayne, the supernumerary or 'flying' interpreter, as he called himself. The presence of this gentleman gave the Baroness almost as much pleasure as that of her Imperial guest himself; for she knew about as much French as the Shah did, and could never have made herself intelligible to him without assistance. It had cost her days to make up her mind what to say to him, for dreadful tales had been told her of his quickness to take offence; how somebody, for example, had observed to him that the sun was very bright; to which he had replied that that was more his (the Shah's) look-out than that of the person making the observation, inasmuch as the sun was his object of worship. She had resolved, after much cogitation, to say, 'Welcome to our humble roof, your Imperial Majesty,' and then leave him to choose his own topics of conversation.

'I don't think much of his suit,' observed the Baron, beneath his breath. He meant his *suite*—which was certainly smaller than might have been expected—but he pronounced the word like a suit of clothes.

'What *would* you have?' replied the Baroness, angrily. 'Look at his fez cap; look at his sabre; he is one blaze of diamonds, and every diamond worth a million at the very least.'

The Baron shook his head; he very seldom dared to do so at anything his wife observed, but upon a question of money's worth he considered he had some right to an opinion. He thought within his breast that if his distinguished guest should be driven to raise

money upon his personal apparel, a million would be a long price for the whole of it.

The general style of progression of the Shah of Persia when put in motion was, as everybody knew by that time, a species of imbecile shamble that at once distinguished him from the common herd ; but on the present occasion it was remarked that he moved with a certain dignity—ill-natured persons said because he was aware that he was performing an act of unusual condescension in coming to Evelyn Lodge at all. This dignity, combined with the splendour of his garments, which glistened like a suit of mail with precious stones, made his progress up the hall, as the Baroness said, ‘a truly Imperial spectacle.’ His attendants glistened little less than himself, and would have cast the flying interpreter, in his ordinary evening clothes, quite into the shade, but for the extraordinary brightness and intelligence of Jack’s eyes. He was a person not easily depressed by hereditary greatness of any kind, and was accustomed to describe his peregrinations with the Shah, in confidence, as ‘a jolly lark.’ On the present occasion, when everybody else was on the tenter-hooks of ceremony and sublime expectation, and the Baroness was, as she afterwards confessed, ‘ready to drop’ with an overpowering sense of personal responsibility, Jack was evidently quite at his ease. His eyes roved hither and thither, and presently fixed themselves on Cyril Clarke with such an expression of comic enjoyment as brought a look of severe reproof into his friend’s face.

‘Welcome to our humble roof, your Imperial Majesty,’ observed the Baroness, in a clear, triumphant voice, at the same time advancing three steps to meet her august visitor.

The Shah’s arms fell flat on his sides, and he bowed profoundly.

‘His Imperial Majesty bids me say that he is very glad to come,’ said Jack, in respectful tones, ‘and that he congratulates you upon the weather.’

Then the Baron came forward.

‘Proud to see your Majesty, I’m sure. Hope it won’t be the last time.’

This was the observation he was accustomed to make to every guest to whom he wished to be civil, and he had not the faculty enjoyed by the Poet-Laureate and others of gracefully varying his phrases.

‘Impossible; starts for Teheran to-night,’ whispered Jack hastily. Then aloud, in grave and deferential tone, he added, ‘His Imperial Majesty reciprocates your good wishes, but is not inclined for prolonged conversation upon any topic.’

This was an immense relief to the hostess, who, with her rounded

arm—on which he kept his eyes fixed as though it were some species of sausage forbidden to the true believer—linked in that of her distinguished guest, began to make a progress through the rooms. The Shah looked exquisitely uncomfortable; his face betrayed that mixture of fear and fierceness peculiar to Eastern despots when in European society, and every now and then he addressed his interpreter in the Persian language in a tone of manifest dissatisfaction. Only when Myra came forward to be introduced to him did he show any symptoms of interest. She was generally mistress of herself, and on this occasion manifested a calmness and dignity that were beyond all praise. The Duchess, who was a witness to the introduction, remarked that the Patterini girl rather overdid it, and would have showed better taste in manifesting a little more humility. But the Shah himself (and nobody cared for the Duchess in comparison with him) appeared more than satisfied.

‘After having seen your daughter, Baroness,’ said the interpreter, ‘his Imperial Majesty feels that there can be nothing left to see worth speaking about, and he would rather go home at once.’

‘Go home! What does he want to go home about? He’s only just come,’ whispered the Baroness remonstratingly. The Shah’s attention was fortunately engaged at the moment in looking at himself in a mirror.

‘He wants to go home and think about her—whether he can afford to buy her,’ answered Jack imperturbably. ‘Don’t say that money won’t do it, because you’ll make him angry. He is not in a sweet temper. That’s why he’s got such a short *suite*. He has just put to death——’

‘Supper is served,’ said the major-domo, approaching his mistress with a respectful obeisance, and cutting short the sanguinary details.

The supper was an immense success. So far from the Shah being particular in his food, he ate of everything. But the sherbet which had been provided for him did not seem to his taste.

‘What *can* we do?’ whispered the Baroness, in great distress.

‘Hush! put some brandy in it,’ said Jack.

‘Brandy? Why, I thought all spirituous drinks were contrary to his religion.’

‘Of course they are: that’s why he likes them. Put lots of brandy in it.’

The Shah drank *this* sherbet like a fish. As the temporal head of the Persian Church, he abstained, however, from the champagne, which his two attendants partook of from large goblets.

The ball was proceeding by this time with great vigour, and everything going on propitiously.

‘Would his Imperial Majesty like a turn in the garden?’

inquired the Baroness, willing that her guest should show himself to those who were unable to penetrate the crowd in the banquetting hall. Jack repeated the invitation, but the Shah shook his twinkling fez.

‘He knows what’s good for him, and I don’t think the open air would quite suit him, Baroness. He has had too much b. and s.—brandy and sherbet. He starts to-night for Teheran, and the sooner I can get him off, the better.’

The Baroness looked at her illustrious visitor with an admiration even greater than before. Her mind reverted to his august ancestor in the *Arabian Nights*, who was wont to make his journeys through the air upon an enchanted carpet. It did not seem to her that he was likely to go to Teheran that night by any other means of progression, and yet the air would be certain to disagree with him.

‘There are some chibouks, Mr. Delayne,’ she whispered; ‘if you think——’

‘Not for worlds,’ answered the interpreter hastily. ‘Get a cup of very strong coffee; then make the band strike up something strong—the “Rogue’s March,” or anything—and I’ll get him away.’

The coffee was brought. The Shah looked at it for a moment with grave displeasure, as though he detected chicory in it, or a drowning fly, and then kicked it out of the attendant’s hand. Fortunately at that instant the band struck up a wild and piercing Eastern air, and, assisted—indeed, compelled—by the arm of his flying interpreter, his Imperial Majesty rose from his divan and proceeded diagonally, and now and then with an unexpected movement at right angles, like the knight at chess, towards the entrance hall. The Baron hastened forward to escort him, but his politeness had nearly cost him dear, for the Eastern potentate, mistaking the object of his haste, and ever on the watch for treachery, half drew his sabre, and yelled something in the Persian tongue which sounded uncommonly like an execration. Jack hurried him through the hall, closely followed by his two prime ministers, or whatever they were, and at the door found the royal carriage in waiting, which whirled him off to the palace.

Everybody said that nothing had been more characteristic of the illustrious visitor, more redolent of Eastern customs, than the mode of his departure. His breaking the coffee-cup to symbolize how his heart was torn at having to bid adieu to his host, his half drawing his yataghan, as though his despair at parting would have almost led him to cut short his own illustrious existence, and his manifest reluctance to leave the house, were the themes of universal admiration.

If a King can do no wrong, a Shah is in a still more unassailable

position ; and it is my belief that, if he had cut the Baron's head off, it would have been set down to his Majesty's geniality and condescension.

Everybody who had caught a glimpse of the Shah that evening was dazzled and delighted. The Duchess of Doldrum publicly acknowledged to her hostess that she had spent a delightful evening, and the Baroness was overwhelmed with congratulations and invitations from 'the best people' in Mayfair.

That very morning, ere the midday beams began to stream into the deserted ball-room, and when the mistress of Evelyn Lodge was still sunk in dreams of greatness, Cyril Clarke was married by special licence, in a neighbouring church, to Myra Patterini.

The consent of both her parents, as we know, had been obtained, and had set her scruples quite at ease, and Cyril—who, unlike his father-in-law, was averse to speculation or risks of any kind—had thought it better to settle the matter. He had been kept 'hanging on and off' so long that he dreaded any more delays.

When the Baron and Baroness came down to their *déjeuner à la fourchette*, they found it was a marriage breakfast, and there was nothing for it but to congratulate the bride and bridegroom.

'After the magnificent event of yesterday, Cyril, you might have taken my approbation for granted,' was the only reproof that fell from his mother-in-law's lips.

'My dear Baroness, I *did* take it for granted,' said Cyril naïvely.

The Baron even went so far as to compliment him upon his sagacity. 'You are a deuced sight' (he was certainly not a real nobleman) 'cleverer fellow than I took you to be,' was his very expression ; nor did his encouragement end in words, for he gave him a cheque for his daughter's dowry upon the spot. He was not pleased with what had happened, but he was a man who never cried over spilled milk ; when he made a bad debt he wiped it off his books, and thought no more about it—nay, he never even spoke ill of his debtor.

There was still another surprise awaiting the Baroness that morning when she came to look at the newspapers. In most of them the *fête* of the previous night was described in the most glowing colours, and the house of Patterini complimented in the highest terms upon the honour that had been conferred upon it ; but one or two had not a word about the matter. They described the movements of the Shah in other directions, and announced his departure for that morning, but not a syllable did they print about his visit to Evelyn Lodge. Those representatives of the press who had not taken advantage of the Baroness's invitations to her ball had quietly ignored it altogether. They had been asked, of course ;

the Baroness had been careful to ask them all; but some malign influences had been at work even upon an incorruptible press, and her politeness had been thrown away. The force of spite and envy on the part of certain people—people who pronounced their *p*'s like *b*'s, but who had influence with the 'babers'—could not further go, as the little party all agreed. Still, as the judge observed in the famous murder case, the testimony of ten witnesses called to prove that they did not see the crime committed was a small thing when weighed against the testimony of one who did see it. And not only had eight hundred persons of fashion seen the Shah at Evelyn Lodge, but the representatives of a dozen newspapers.

This latter fact became afterwards of great importance, for, incredible as it may seem, no sooner had his Imperial Majesty left England—*i.e.*, that very afternoon—and been thereby prevented from contradicting the ridiculous statement in person, than a rumour got afloat that *he had never been at the Patterini ball at all!*

The conflict of evidence was very curious. Eight hundred persons of fashion *plus* twelve newspaper reporters on one side, and all the people of fashion who had not been able to obtain invitations and all the newspapers *minus* twelve upon the other. Immense influence—I am sorry to say, even that of the Lord Chamberlain himself—was thrown into the latter scale; but people who had met the Shah of Persia at supper were not likely to be browbeaten out of *that* fact, and the twelve newspapers, of course, stuck to their guns. Nobody ever heard of a newspaper acknowledging itself in the wrong, except under pressure of an action for libel, and the action (and the idea of bringing one was at one time seriously debated at Evelyn Lodge) would have been instituted in this case, if at all, by the other side. Cyril persuaded the Baroness, with difficulty, to treat the scandal with the contempt it deserved, and so the matter rested.

The divan on which the Shah had sat in solitary state—the Persian Lone, as Jack had called him—and the chibouk which he would have smoked had he not taken so much brandy with his sherbet, were preserved with reverent care, and shown to particular friends as a special favour for long afterwards.

Only two things, as it seems to me, gave any colour to the ridiculous and malicious rumour to which I have alluded. The one was Jack Delayne's sudden retirement from the Foreign Office, in consequence, it was stated, of some transgression in connection with his Imperial Majesty's visit, but which might, of course, have been for any other reason, for there were plenty. The other was even a still slighter ground for the scandal: it was only the fact that among the numerous members of the household of Cyril Clarke, Esq.,

was to be seen an Eastern retainer, said to have been *the* Persian crossing-sweeper in Regent Street, who disappeared at the very date of the great event I have been describing—the ball at the Patterini's. This was in all probability a mere coincidence; and what it could possibly have to do with the Shah of Persia's visit to Evelyn Lodge I leave the reader to judge. Cyril proved an excellent son-in-law; and again and again I have heard the Baron Patterini remark, that he was 'a deuced sight' &c., &c.; in fact, he had the very highest opinion of his sagacity. He used to have rows with his mother-in-law—who has not? But with regard to the Shah of Persia, not a word ever passed between them. As to Myra, if anything *was* wrong about that Imperial visit (and far be it from me to hint there was), it is certain that she knew all about it from the moment that telegram came for Cyril, when he assured her that 'the man' would come, and offered to 'lay his life that her dear mother should not be disappointed.'

Bird or Reptile—which?

To most people it may appear not only easy enough to distinguish, but even a matter of some difficulty not to be able to identify, a bird from a reptile or from any other animal whatsoever. No one would hesitate for a moment to assign to the Bird tribe, on seeing them even for the first time, forms differing from each other so much as the 'wingless' apteryx of New Zealand and the strong-pinioned albatross; the marvellously tinted humming-bird and the raw-necked vulture; or the fleet ostrich and the stolid hornbill; for in each individual the eye at once perceives one character at least common to the whole assemblage which is wanting in all other groups. Yet the question to be discussed in this paper of Bird or not-Bird, and in particular of Bird or Reptile, is, as we shall see below, one not without serious difficulty.

In order to a more easy comprehension of the question, let us shortly, and with as few technicalities of expression as possible, pass in review the chief characters of the groups we have placed in apposition.

Birds may be characterised generally as feathered bipeds, whose mouth is modified into a longer or shorter beak encased in a horny sheath, sometimes serrated along the margin, but never presenting true teeth; whose fore limbs assume the form of wings more or less developed, and having the hind limbs supported on, at most, four toes, the innermost, however, in many birds being so imperfectly developed as not to reach the ground.

Everyone who has handled a living bird knows that it is warm blooded; and whoever, while not neglecting the 'main chance,' when dining on partridge or fowl, has nevertheless not been too absorbed to mark the prominent points that distinguished the skeletal remains of his feast from those of a hare, for instance, is aware that along the centre of the breast-bone there runs a high crest for the attachment of the wing muscles; that the collar-bones unite to form the bone of destiny with which he has been familiar from his youth as the 'merrythought;' that the haunch-bone, which encloses the bowels and gives attachment to the hind limbs, differs from a higher quadruped's in being composed, not of two bones (each of which is in reality made up of three bones ossified together), one on each side articulating with yet separate from the spine, and touching each other in the median line beneath, but of these elements and several vertebræ in addition, consolidated into

one, having the margins free and separated by a considerable space from each other below; and that instead of a tail commonly so called, the rear of the spinal column is brought up by what is known as the 'ploughshare' bone formed by the union of several of its segments into a terminal mass for the support of the rudder-quills and of the oil gland. Several very marked characteristics are to be seen in the hind limb, to which, without entering deeply into osteological details, we may draw attention. Opening into the hollow shafts of the stronger bones—a character common to those of the wing and parts of the spine—there are to be found small pores, the air passages by which the air sacs, themselves extensions of the air tubes of the lungs, are prolonged into the bones. In the skull also we find numerous air cavities; these, however, are filled, not from the lung air system, but from the nasal and ear chambers. No one who has examined the leg-bone, often called the 'drum-stick' (technically the tibia), of a common fowl can have failed to observe the great ridge, or prominent crest, on the front of its upper extremity, or how easily the pulley-shaped articular surface of its lower end separates off from the shaft in the young bird, especially if the bone has been boiled or macerated for some time in water. This peculiarity vanishes when the fowl attains to its full growth; but till then the separation remains, as if to assert the right of the extremity to be considered, what in reality it is, a separate and distinct bone, the sole representative of a colony of ossicles (corresponding to the bones of the heel in the human foot) once existing in its grandsires at this spot, which for reasons of expediency has here coalesced with its long neighbour. On its outer side the leg-bone is always accompanied by a very slender bone, known as the fibula, attached only at its upper end, tapering gradually to a point about the middle of its fellow. Lastly, to the leg-bone immediately succeeds the hock-bone, the beautiful conformation of whose lower end into the resemblance of a triple pulley, for the articulation of the toes, is a mark by which we can unhesitatingly say that it belonged to a bird.

Bearing in mind these peculiarities, for whose detection no very deep scrutiny is required, which are but a few, yet sufficient for our present purpose, of the more striking characteristics to which the members of the Avian family more or less closely conform, we shall now for a little turn our attention to that other division of the animal kingdom with which we have in the title of this article contrasted the Bird.

The Reptiles are a wonderfully interesting group on account not only of the marvellous variety of their habits and modes of life,

but also of their manifold diversity of form. Our country, in common with the rest of Northern Europe, can claim to be the habitat of but few examples of this tribe, whose home is under warmer latitudes; and consequently only limited opportunities present themselves to the European student for becoming acquainted with their habits and animated forms, unless he happens to live within reach of the menageries of the Zoological Societies of London, Berlin, Paris, or Amsterdam; those who are unfortunately distant from such interesting educational centres must make their acquaintance in a mummified or skeletonised form in museums. It cannot but strike the visitor to any zoological collection where the vertebrated section is well represented that the cases devoted to the Reptilian group contain forms so divergent as the tortoise and the lizard, the snake and the alligator. If, however, the eye be permitted to pass to the sections on either hand—on the one side, to the amphibious animals, such as the frogs and newts, and on the other, to the birds—it is impossible not to perceive that the contrast is very great. A careless or inexperienced classifier might, perchance, be tempted to relegate the lizard to a place among the Amphibia, near to the newts, or *vice versâ*; but the most unobservant of men could never locate a snake among the birds, nor set a turtle or a crocodile on the same shelf with the swallow or the golden-crested wren.

The first and lowest link of the Reptilian segment in the great chain of animal existences, commences just above the highest of the amphibian assemblage, and is constituted by the river and mud-loving tortoises and the turtles of the warmer seas; while the highest now living embraces the Crocodilian family, in whose membership are included the alligators and jacars of the New World, the crocodiles of the Ganges and the gavials of Northern Africa. The gap between these extremes is filled up by various intermediate gradations. To the tortoises succeeds, according to our best classifiers, a powerful race of long-necked ancient mariners—the plesiosaurs—which hunted their prey by the sea-coasts of the geological Middle Ages, where they left their bones, the sole testimony to the existence of their race, which became extinct before the chalk cliffs of England were completed, however long ago that may be. After them comes the large group of the true lizards, comprising, along with several extinct orders, the chameleons, the lizards, and the geckos, both the latter being familiar enough to continental travellers on sunny spots in Southern Europe; the geckos, especially, attracting attention by their habit of running on ceilings and perpendicular walls, by their sucker-formed toes. The next cohort embraces the serpents—the

pythons and boas, endued with a power of crushing almost unsurpassed in the animal kingdom; and the rattlesnakes and cobras, carrying swift and certain death in the lightning stroke of their head. The next place is assigned to the great fish-lizards, or ichthyosaurs, which frequented the deeper waters of the same seas as the plesiosaurs, of whose existence also all knowledge would have perished for ever, since they died out leaving no representative to continue their line, had not the kindly mud of the bottom preserved for us fragments of their history in their disjointed bones. Advancing from these 'dragons of the prime' we again reach the crocodiles, the most specialised of modern reptiles.

Although between the highest and the lowest of these forms there is nothing like the close bond of union which connects the most distantly related of the birds, yet these diverse families have many characters in common, separating them from the other divisions of the animal world. Their bodies are protected by modifications of the skin into scales, enormous rugosities of almost impenetrable horny plates or flat shields of various forms. No reptile has ever feathers, for, on account of a peculiarity of the circulation of the blood by which the aërated and unaërated portions mingle together, they are cold blooded, and therefore do not require so heat-conserving a covering for the body. Most reptiles possess two pairs of legs, of which the fore limb conforms much more closely to the hind in structure than is the case between the anterior and posterior extremities of the bird. On these they crawl rather than walk, their bellies, which are dragged along the ground, assisting in the support of the body; some have both pairs adapted for aquatic life, while others are entirely devoid of progressional appendages. No member of the class can be called a true volant, notwithstanding that a few, such as the flying dragons of the Philippine Islands, are able, by means of membranous expansions of the skin, to sustain themselves in the air while passing from one tree or support to another. With the exception of the tortoises, the majority are carnivorous and possess powerful jaws set with strong sharp teeth.

So much lies on the surface.

From an examination of the chief points of their internal framework we learn that the 'collar-bones' do not unite to form a 'merrythought'; nor does the breast-bone develop a median keel. In general the tail is more or less elongated, but its terminal segments do not unite to form a 'ploughshare' bone. The leg-bone of the reptile differs from the bird's in having a well developed fibula lying parallel to it throughout its whole length; it does not present a strongly marked crest at its upper end, nor is

the articular surface of the narrow lower extremity formed by the coalescence with the shaft of a separate bone into a pulley-shaped termination. The coalescence never takes place at all; but each retains a separate existence throughout life. In the situation of the hock in the bird the reptile has at least four distinct bones to which are articulated as many toes; and lastly, the haunch-bone, instead of being a consolidated mass, is composed of two halves, one on each side, articulating with, but not united by bony tissue to the spine, and meeting each other below—a character in which the struthious birds, such as the ostriches, agree. It may be remarked also that in their keelless breast-bone, as well as in the disunion of their collar-bones, these birds present other similitudes to the reptiles.

Every student of osteology is well aware that all bones in their embryonic condition are composed of cartilage, wherein, as the animal grows older, bony spots or 'centres' appear, whence the ossification spreads till the whole structure is converted into bone. Among the higher animals these centres are seen only during the earlier years of life, while with increasing age their outlines, becoming gradually fainter, are at length entirely lost. But among the reptiles many of the bones either continue throughout life with their component parts unsolidified together, or else indicate by clear marks their lines of union, so that it is always easy to tell the number and configuration of which each is composed.

Thus far the characters which separate a reptile from a bird stand so widely apart—the interval between the highest living crocodile and the nearest living bird (represented by such forms as the New Zealand kiwis, the mooruk of Australia, the cassowary of the Moluccas and the rheas or ostriches of South America) is of such enormous magnitude—that it would seem needless to entertain any fear of mistaking a member of the former group for one of the latter. Meanwhile let us withhold any decided opinion.

On November 29, 1871, a letter to Professor Dana, dated from San Francisco, written by Professor O. C. Marsh, of Yale College, New Haven, Ct., announced the discovery of a portion of a large headless skeleton in the Upper Chalk formation of Western Kansas, consisting of the nearly entire posterior limbs, portions of the haunch-bones, several segments from the neck and tail of the spinal column, and numerous ribs, all in excellent preservation. The long leg-bone exhibited on the front aspect of its upper extremity the large crest which, as we have already pointed out, is a markedly Avian character; along its shaft lay a fibula developed as among the diving birds of the present day, to whose thigh-bone

also that of the fossil bore considerable resemblance. The 'hock-bone,' in presenting a trifold pulley-shaped lower end, was bird-like; while in the oblique arrangement of these divisions it again claimed affinities with the divers, whose toes are articulated in this manner to facilitate the forward stroke of their feet through the water. The external division, however, which projects beyond the other two, and is twice the size of either, is developed in a way unknown in any recent or fossil bird, and the bones of the toe supported by it are peculiarly articulated to produce rigidity and prevent flexion, except in one direction, in order by the interlocking of the bones to increase the strength of the joints during the act of swimming; for the whole limb is unquestionably adapted for rapid motion through water. The haunch-bone presents some resemblance to what is seen among the reptiles, in the permanence as separate bones of some of the portions of which it is composed, and in its not being firmly joined to the spine by bony union as in ordinary birds.

The examination so far of these interesting remains proved that the skeleton was certainly a bird's. On comparing its various bones with the corresponding ones in existing representatives, its affinities, notwithstanding considerable divergences from all known recent or ancient species and genera, were evidently with the swimming birds, of which it is the largest known exponent, and of these it most resembled the great northern diver, near which—for a time—it received a niche with the appellation of Royal Bird-of-the-Dawn (*Hesperornis regalis*).

On September 26, 1872, Silliman's 'American Journal of Science' announced the disinterment of another skeleton from the Chalk of Kansas, 'one of the most interesting of recent discoveries in palæontology.' The remains included, among other bones, a number of bi-concave vertebræ, that is, having the bodies, or solid central piece of the spinal segments, cup-shaped at both ends, a configuration which obtains, as everyone has observed, in the divisions of the back-bone of the common cod. This characteristic of the spine is frequent enough among reptiles; but it never occurs among birds met with nowadays. If among them there be any tendency that way, as there is in a few birds, the concavity is invariably found in the posterior end, the rarest form of vertebræ among reptiles. 'The neck, back, and tail vertebræ preserved, all show this character, the ends of their bodies (centra) resembling those in the plesiosaurs;' notwithstanding the strongly non-Avian description of the spine, all the other bones—the prominently keeled breast-bone, the collar-bone united to form a 'merrythought,' as well as the leg- and long wing-bones—exhibit

those marks which we have found to be most typical of the Bird tribe. The wings were large in proportion to the posterior extremities; and the lower end of the leg-bones is incurved as in swimming birds. Professor Marsh, therefore, judging from their relative proportion, concludes that the bones belonged to a bird, about the size of a pigeon, in many respects resembling the aquatic birds. He has christened it, *Ichthyornis dispar*.

In October of the same year this indefatigable geologist once more announced through the pages of 'Silliman' a new 'find' from his favourite and fruitful mine in Upper Kansas. This time it was 'a new reptile from the cretaceous,' 'a very small saurian, which differs widely from any hitherto discovered.' The only remains found on this occasion were two lower jaws, nearly perfect, and with many of the teeth in good preservation. The jaws resemble in general form those of an extinct family of marine reptiles whose remains were first found in the Chalk formation near Maestricht; but apart from their very diminutive size they present several features which no species of that group has been observed to possess. Noticeably, the teeth are implanted in distinct sockets, and are directed obliquely backward. There are apparently twenty in each jaw, all compressed, with very acute summits. Then there is no distinct groove on the inner surface of the jaws as in all known Mososauroids—as the family of Maestricht reptiles is named. 'Clearly,' says Professor Marsh, 'the specimen indicates a new genus.'

A more careful removal of the surrounding shale brought to light a fact that enormously enhanced the importance and value of this 'most interesting of recent discoveries in palæontology.' The jaws, which had been accredited to 'a new genus' of reptiles, belonged most undoubtedly, from the position in which they were found with reference to the other bones, to the *Ichthyornis dispar*, which owned the spine with double cup-shaped segments. Here was a dilemma! The ichthyornis had on what seemed reliable data been adjudged a bird; but not only was no bird ever known to have teeth set in sockets, but no bird had ever yet differed so far from its fellows as to affect teeth at all, not to mention the fact of its having resuscitated the fashion of a by-gone day in having its spinal vertebræ cupped at both ends. When it lived, was this creature, in which the types have become so strangely mixed, a reptile, or after all a bird? was a question that for a time made the brows of the philosophers anxious even in the midst of their happiness at the new discovery. They finally declared for the latter. There was, therefore, no resource left but to extend the boundaries which had hitherto confined the Avian

territory, and institute a new sub-class for its reception, whereat the ornithologists were greatly pleased and cordially welcomed the Toothbills among their feathered friends.

Among the treasures which on December 7, 1872, Professor Marsh and his Yale College explorers brought back to New Haven, as the results of their autumn reaping among the Rocky Mountains, was the nearly entire skeleton, containing all the missing bones, of the royal hesperornis and of another bi-concave vertebrated bird.

The breast-bone of the gigantic diver of the Chalk is thin and weak and entirely without a keel; in front it resembles the ostrich's or that of the apteryx of New Zealand—a group of birds presenting the greatest range in time and also the widest geographical distribution over the globe—but in some respects it approaches to the penguin's also. The wing-bones are diminutive, and the wings are rudimentary and useless as organs of flight. The bones that girdle the thigh clearly exhibit a resemblance to the corresponding bones of a cassowary; yet, although Avian in type, they are peculiar and present some well-marked Reptilian proclivities.

Furnished with these bones alone, and judging from his experience of bird architecture, in plan hitherto undeviated from, no ornithologist would have hesitated to relegate the remains to a place among the Birds; and had he been asked to restore the missing portions, he would in all probability have devised some cross between the corresponding parts of the Divers, of the Dabchicks (for their knee-cap resembles that of the hesperornis), and of the ostrich-like birds, adding thereto a tail somewhat after the model of the penguin's. Certain it is, however, he would never have approached the features presented by the actual bones. This primeval bird possessed a skull in its general form like that of the great northern diver, but with a less pointed beak. The jaw-bones, however, though they were originally covered with a horny bill as in ordinary birds, are widely different. They are massive and have throughout their length a deep groove which was thickly set with sharp-pointed teeth—evidence of carnivorous habits—their crowns covered with enamel and supported on stout fangs. In form of crown and base they most resemble the teeth of the reptiles found in the Maestricht beds, to which we have referred above, as well as in the method of replacement, for some of the teeth preserved have the crowns of their successors implanted in cavities in their fangs. This peculiarity in the manner of teeth shedding is characteristic of some reptiles, each of whose teeth is merely a hollow cone filled in the interior with a soft pulp which supplies the material for the external bony layer. When the tooth becomes

worn and useless, a new one is formed beneath the shell of the first by the pulp in the interior, which gradually ousts the old from its socket. In addition to these, the *hesperornis* possessed other Reptilian characters. While the formation of the spinal column in the neck and back is of the true Avian type, the structure of the tail, where there have been discovered no fewer than twelve segments, is very peculiar, and differs entirely from anything hitherto seen in birds. The bones of its middle and posterior portions have very long and horizontally flattened processes which prevent all motion in a lateral direction: a peculiarity from which we may certainly infer that, like the beaver's, this appendage was moved vertically, and doubtless was an efficient aid in diving, perhaps compensating for want of wings, which the penguins use with such wonderful dexterity in swimming under water. The last three or four bones are firmly united together, forming a flat terminal mass analogous to, but quite unlike, the 'ploughshare' bone of modern birds.

Here again is another form half doubtful whether to assume the Reptilian or the Avian garb, a protestant against the hard and fast lines within which the various groups of the animal kingdom have hitherto been confined. The *hesperornis* certainly approaches the *ichthyornis* so far as to come under the new sub-class instituted for the reception of that bird; but inasmuch as it differs in having its teeth not in sockets but set in a groove, and since, rejecting the conservative bi-concavity in the matter of spinal segments, it has adopted a newer and more high-class 'cut,' it has been necessary to give to each the honour of heading a separate section.

Though no living bird has so long a tail as this Bird-of-the-dawn, yet there was in 1862 disinterred from the lithographic slates of Solenhofen part of the skeleton of a feathered biped—the archæopteryx (the existence of which was foreshadowed by the discovery of a feather the year before), exhibiting in most of the bones preserved the marks of a true bird. In the length of its tail, however, it is peculiar. This appendage contains the enormous number of twenty distinct bones gradually decreasing in size to the last, and each supporting a pair of quill feathers. To the skeleton no head is attached; but a portion of a small separate jaw on the same slab has been the subject of much controversy as to whether it belongs to the accompanying bones or not. Hermann von Meyer, the illustrious anatomist and palæontologist, holds that there can be little doubt but that they are parts of one and the same skeleton. If this be so, these remains belonged to a toothed bird; and Professor Marsh thinks that probably it possessed bi-con-

cave segments in its back-bone, indicating, therefore, some alliance with the ichthyornis. The structure of its wings, Professor Huxley points out, differs in some very remarkable respects from that which they present in a true bird. In the archæopteryx the upper arm-bone is like that of a bird, and the two bones of the forearm are more or less like those of a bird; but the fingers, which in all modern Avian representatives are fused together into one mass, are not bound together—they are free. What the number may have been is uncertain, but several, if not all, of them were terminated by a strong curved claw; so that in the archæopteryx we have an animal which to a certain extent occupies a mid-way place between a bird and a reptile. It is a bird in so far as its foot and sundry other parts of its skeleton are concerned; it is essentially and thoroughly a bird by its feathers: but it is much more properly a reptile in the fact, that the region which represents the hand has separate bones with claws resembling those which terminate the fore-limb of a reptile. Teeth and a long tail, moreover, have certainly been considered hitherto non-Avian characteristics.

More recently in our own country there has been brought to light from the London clay, in the island of Sheppey, a skull with the margins of the jaw-bones armed with larger alternating with smaller denticulations. It has been submitted to the examination of Professor Owen, *facile princeps* among the restorers of osteological remains, who concludes that it belonged 'to a warm-blooded feathered biped with wings'—to a bird, in fact—'and further, that it was web-footed and a fish eater, and that in the catching of its slippery prey it was assisted by the peculiar armature of its jaws.' Many living birds, such as the Mergansers or Saw-bills, have denticulations on the borders of the horny covering of the bill; but no modern bird has ever the underlying bone elevated into ridges or denticulations like those seen in the London-clay fossil. On the palate, however, of the rare *Phytotome*, a South American perching bird belonging to the group of the Leafcutters, which bears in its structure many 'marks of ancientness,' we find two rows of bony denticulations, the remains of what are apparently but recently lost teeth, if we calculate time by the geological horologe, and which may be faint memorials of the dental arrangement seen in the chameleon. Certainly, 'they are not the less of interest, seeing that as yet we have nothing else intervening between them and the teeth of the Sheppey fossil.' How far this fossil may have resembled any of the Avian remains which we have described above, we must wait to know. To conjecture would be dangerous, considering how

wide of the mark would have been, in all likelihood, the restoration, had any been attempted, of the hesperornis, whose true structure when revealed so greatly surprised the most experienced naturalists. All that can at present be said is, that the owner of the solitary skull could not have claimed a place within the old Avian province. It is interesting, however, in affording a suggestion as to the possible steps by which the Toothbills, as regards the armature of their jaws, may have passed into modern toothless birds.

The Stonesfield slates have yielded up an almost entire skeleton of a wonderful extinct form, unique as yet, described under the name of *Compsognathus*, which possesses a singularly long neck supporting a head whose structure is light, and, except in the possession of teeth, bird-like. Its anterior limbs are small, while the leg-bone of its very long hind limb exhibits the prominent crest of which we have so often spoken, a ridge on its outer side for the fibula, and the pulley-shaped articular surface of its lower end identical in conformation with that seen in the bird. This skeleton diverges from the Bird type, however, in the absence of a 'merrythought,' and in having the single hock-bone of the bird replaced by three distinct bones, fitting immoveably together, of which the trifid extremity of a fowl's, for example, indicates the coalescence. The haunch-bone, moreover, indicates relationship with the reptiles, in its form and in the manner in which it unites below with its fellow of the opposite side,—a feature in which it agrees with the arrangement of the corresponding bone in the crocodiles and in the rheas. This strange creature, bird or reptile, 'must without doubt,' Professor Huxley remarks, 'have hopped or walked on its hind limbs after the manner of a bird, to which its long neck, slight head, and small anterior limbs must have given it an extraordinary resemblance.' There is reason for believing that it was possessed of a long tail, which must have greatly helped to support it in the erect position.

The extinct group to which this singular Stonesfield fossil has been assigned contains some of the largest known terrestrial animals, such as the carnivorous giant-lizard (*megalosaurus*), thirty feet in length, whose structure in many points resembles that of the bird, especially in the form of its hip-girdle and hind limbs, on which, in the late Professor Phillips's opinion, it moved with free steps, sometimes, if not habitually, claiming a curious analogy, if not some degree of affinity, with the ostrich. Another example is the still more gigantic herb-eating *iguanodon*, from beds in Sussex, taller than an elephant and vaster in size, wherein also are mingled Avian and Reptilian characters. In the form of its

vertebræ, which, except in the neck, are double-cup-shaped, it is Reptilian: in the absence of collar bones, it is non-Avian; but in the formation of its three-toed hind limbs, which are larger than the fore, as well as of the supporting haunch-bone, it is distinctly bird-like. Again, it is un-birdlike in regard to its teeth, whose general form and crenated edges are somewhat like the iguanas', which now frequent the tropical woods of America and of the West Indies; but they differ from them in having a flat surface on the crown of the tooth, worn down evidently by the process of mastication, whereas the herbivorous reptiles of the present day clip and gnaw off, but do not chew, the vegetable productions on which they feed.

On the same sands at Hastings there have been found large impressions of the three-toed foot of some biped the length of whose stride was so great that it is impossible not to conclude that they were made by the hind feet of one or other of the seventy monsters whose bones have been found scattered about within the narrow area of what was once the banks and delta of a great Wealden river, and which, like the giant-lizards, probably walked occasionally, if not always, on their hind limbs with their fore-feet elevated in front. The question again arises, nor is it easy to answer, whether these forms should be called Reptilian birds or Avian reptiles.

In the northern gallery of the British Museum there is a very instructive specimen of a reptile, the frilled lizard of Australia, caught near Port Nelson while perching on the stem of a tree. Its long tail recalls at once the same appendage in the kangaroos, inasmuch as by its position in the stuffed specimen the creature would seem to use it as a support to its body. Its fore feet are much smaller than its hind; and an Australian resident, to whom the specimen was shown in presence of Dr. Günther and himself—so Dr. Woodward tells us in a paper read before the Geological Society—remarked that it not merely sits up occasionally, but habitually runs on the ground on its hind legs without allowing its fore paws to touch the earth. The edges of its jaw-bones are elevated into enamel tipped denticulations which remind us of those in the jaw-bone of the Sheppey fossil. In the same slates which have given us the long-tailed reptilian bird and the long-necked bird-like lizard, there has been found a three-toed bipedal track which 'reminded me,' says Dr. Woodward, 'at once of what the frilled lizard or the compsognathus might produce under favourable conditions. The slab presents a median track formed by the tail drawn along on the ground; the two hind feet with outspread toes leave their mark, whilst the fore paws just touch the ground, leaving a dot-like impression on either side of the median line.'

The median track is alternately stronger and fainter. Since the tail of the archæopteryx is bordered all the way by feathers, it will at once be seen that it could not leave behind a clean simple furrow, but a broad smudge composed of many lines, while the tail of a lizard progressing by hops and supporting itself on its hind limbs and tail would produce just such an impression.'

There is yet another interesting group of extinct forms to which we would refer shortly, termed 'winged reptiles, or flying dragons.' In the Woodwardian Museum at Cambridge there is a large collection of these bones, belonging to many species, from the soft marl in the neighbourhood of that town, about which there have been entertained the most diverse opinions by the most eminent naturalists. They have been variously held to belong to bats, to forms between birds and mammals, to reptiles, and even to dolphins. Professor Huxley finds in them great resemblances to birds; Professor Owen thinks that they are reptilian remains; while Professor Seeley, judging from the form of the cranium, is of opinion that these flying dragons 'had a brain indistinguishable from a bird's.'

They are all remarkable for their great proportionate length of head and neck, for in some the lizard-like and in others the bird-like length of tail, and for the large size of the fore limb, which, quite unlike the same extremity in a bird, was terminated by four digits, whereof three were clawed, while the clawless fourth or little finger was enormously elongated to support the outer edge of an expansion of the integument like the wing of a bat. The bones of the hind limb and of the haunch differ widely from the bird-type; nevertheless air-passages such as characterise no other kind of skeleton are met with in the bones of the head, of the spine, and of the fore and hind limbs, often coinciding identically in situation with those in birds, and indicate, according to Professor Seeley, a system of air circulation from the lungs similar to what is found in birds. From this he argues the existence in these gigantic volants of warm blood and of a heart similar to the bird in construction. They have the breast-bone broad, strongly keeled, and unlike that of other reptiles; there is evidence also that the jaws were encased in a horny sheath. On these considerations, therefore, it is held that, as far as the skeleton indicates, their differences from birds are much less than the differences between the several orders of mammals or reptiles. The same palæontologist has made careful casts of the interior of the skull, and from the position of certain lobes whose distance or proximity distinguishes the brains of modern birds and reptiles, he says in an interesting paper on the subject in the Linnean Society's Transactions for 1876, 'the

resemblance of form and arrangement of parts between this fossil animal's brain and the brain of a bird amounts as far as the evidence goes to absolute identity; no more perfect specimen could add to the force of the conclusion that its brain is an Avian brain of a typical structure. Since brain and lungs are organs of incomparably greater value in questions of organisation than fore and hind limbs—organs in which, according to Professor Huxley, they depart most widely from the bird type—the flying dragons on the whole are very Reptilian birds rather than very Avian reptiles.'

The Solenhofen stone preserves not only bones and hard parts, but even the cutaneous characters of its old inhabitants. It shows casts of the down and feathers, impressions of the fine foldings or wrinkles of thin expansions of naked skin, as well as of delicate tendons. Professor Owen, therefore, thinks that if the flying dragons had possessed any plumose clothing it would in all probability have been preserved, and as no such indications (but contrariwise, several genera undoubtedly had their body covering hardened into bony scales, sometimes produced into prodigious spines) have been discovered, though the Oolitic mud has entombed the greatest number and variety of these beings, he concludes that they were cold-blooded, as other reptiles are; whereas if they had been warm-blooded, they would have possessed feathers, as their contemporary the *archæopteryx* did; for the constant correlative structure with hot-bloodedness is a non-conducting covering for the body. Professor Huxley, on the other hand, differing from this anatomist, thinks that, judging from the air passages in their bones, they were warm-blooded, but that nevertheless they were reptiles with special modifications for special purposes.

It would, therefore, appear that we are again face to face with a group which the most eminent authorities are far from agreed whether to regard as Reptiles or as Birds.

We have now passed in review various remarkable forms—living birds and living reptiles, separated by an immeasurable distance from each other, and forms which have so mingled the characters of both as to present great difficulties to their being included among the members of either group. Starting from the grovelling crocodile, we have seen that there existed gigantic crocodile-like forms, such as the giant-lizard and the *iguanodon*, that walked, sometimes at least, on their hind limbs; others, like the long-necked, long-tailed *compsognathus* from the Solenhofen slates, that hopped on the ground after the manner of a bird; then 'flying dragons,' with bird-like brain and bones that cleft the air with their twenty-feet expanse of wing; next, undoubted birds, with toothed bills, the one with reptilian vertebræ, the other with a

beaver-like tail ; while last of all, omitting the imperfectly known Sheppey fossil, the feathered archæopteryx whose twenty caudal segments bars its entrance to every existing family of birds.

Without by any means asserting—what is not only far from being ascertained fact, but is indeed very improbable ; for we are not in a position to state that they appeared on the earth intermediately between the two groups—that these forms are the direct terms in the series of progressions from Reptiles to Birds, we can, in their intelligent contemplation, without overstraining the imagination or violating our reason, picture still more modified forms wherein the Reptilian and the Avian types would so harmoniously blend that we should find it impossible to say, ‘at this point the line between Reptiles and Birds must be drawn.’ There can be no reasonable doubt but that the remains, which only through the circumstance of a happy burial have been preserved to us from the second great era of the world’s history till now, are no more than a very few examples with many a blank between of the Fauna which has lived and died, whose tombs no man knoweth. Moreover, it seems easy enough to believe, after studying these forms that, could any human eye have followed from that day to this the waxing and waning of the various animal groups, he could have constructed for us a marvellous chain of existences between Reptiles and Birds, the conformation of whose unknown links we can almost fabricate in our minds, between which no abrupt transitions harshly jarring would occur, no stepping-stones too wide to stride across ; and handing on to us, besides, the traditions of a still earlier time, he could have pictured to us the whole of living nature, each varied offshoot fitly joined together, sloping gently back along the vast converging lines of ordinary generation to one grand starting point, wherein till the fulness of time every living thing, from the microscopic diatom to the giant sequoia, and from the shapeless amœba to the stateliest of bipeds,

‘Lay hidden, as the music of the moon
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale.’

HENRY O. FORBES.

A Tourist's Notes.

WERNIGERODE, July 24, 1878.

Oh, fairest day of summer weather!
 When you and I set out together,
 With hearts as light as eagle's feather,
 To trace our path through pines, o'er heathor.
 We left Goslar's red roofs below,
 We climbed the hill-side all a-blow
 With fiery foxgloves' purple glow,
 And heard the mountain brooklets flow.
 This is the land whose ancient dreams
 Gave voice to brutes and tongues to streams;
 Here, resting from the noontide beams,
 When driven out by stepdame schemes,
 A tired lad was fain to drink,
 But, as he bent towards the brink,
 The rippling rivers cried, 'Beware!
 Or wolf, or timid fawn, or bear,
 Is he who sips this water fair.'
 This is the land where Grisly Beard
 As beggar and as groom appeared,
 To tame his bride so proudly reared;
 I saw her very image sitting,
 Mid pots and pans and all things fitting,
 To-day in Wernigerode town.
 This is the land Grimm handed down
 To us in tales of old renown:
 A wondrous land, where fair Princesses
 Kept geese, and gathered water-cresses;
 A frog desired a maid's caresses,
 To see her bind at night her tresses,
 And even to taste her German messes!
 So Grimm and Cruikshank threw a glamour,
 Which never woodman's axe and hammer,
 Nor even mines' destructive clamour,
 Shall take from out our souls; we went
 Up morning slopes with dew besprent,
 Lost, found our way, and, somewhat spent,
 Came out upon the forest glade
 Where, grand, the Brocken rears his head
 Above us, climbing toward the east.
 We passed where lies, like couchant beast,
 The Quetschen Rock; then thunder breaking,
 Rolled as if heaven and earth were shaking,
 And all the Brocken ghosts awaking.

It ceased, and solemn stillness brooded
 On heathy slopes, so fairly wooded,
 And all with sunshine glory flooded.
 Here Heine clomb, to steep his pain
 In peace, then mock that peace again :
 Here Goethe brought to feast profane
 The creatures of his mighty brain.
 We could not stay mid pot-house revel,
 Where once had danced the very devil ;
 We could not brook each gesture civil,
 Each ' Guten Tag,' the perfumes evil :
 Somewhere I've read, that if you banish
 A damned spirit, he will vanish
 With horrid scent: all now that tells
 Of fiends on Brocken is the smells.
 So we came down: a sinking sun
 Gilded the drops that, one by one,
 Dripped from the skirts of flying mist,
 And all the tree-tops gently kissed.
 How we came down we hardly wist,
 'Twas not the true path: far astray
 We struggled on our darkling way,
 Past charcoal huts, with ruddy fire,
 Down timber tracks knee-deep in mire,
 Yet feeling, when we reached at last
 A road-side hostel, almost past
 All wants but that of utter rest,
 That all our day had been the best,
 And chance had made us fully blest,
 Had given our souls a newer birth,
 And freed us from the dust of earth.

BALLENSTEDT, July 26, 1878.

THROUGH long flat fields of beet or waving corn,
 Leaving the hills, we reached the hills again,
 And all the stretch of that great German plain
 Was steeped in sleepy haze of summer morn.
 Some might have called it dull, but as we went
 The air was full of roadside clover scent,
 The hills were ever in the distance, telling
 Of cooler breezes, and of fountains welling,
 With which at eventide we should be blest ;
 And all things, even the railroad, spoke of rest.
 Strange are these old-world castles in the wold,
 That we have left, and this to which we came :
 Gone is the knight, and gone the gracious dame,
 Their hearts and memories alike are cold.
 One now is gay with carpets from Berlin ;
 Workmen restore, destroy, 'tis all the same ;
 And one, o'ergrown without, and chill within,
 Is yet in keeping with its ancient name,

The Falcon-stone. It is in vain to pour
New wine into old bottles, nevermore
Can former manners dovetail into ours.

Yet is the Past a well wherein to steep
Our souls: and so, with newly quickened powers,

We turn from mountain side and castle keep,
Go back to live our lives as best we may:
Sons of a peaceful but more restless day.

MAGDEBURG to KÖLN, July 28, 1878.

THE quiet town, the forest walks,
The friends we met, what could be better?
The frankness of our happy talks,
When, unexpected, came a letter,
Which 'broke our fair companionship,'
And called me off at once to Paris,
A kindly word from every lip,
Hand clasped with hand of him who tarries.
Good-bye, my friend! when next we meet,
How much will come to mar our pleasure,—
The busy noises of the street,
Exhausting work, and want of leisure.
To me this rest has all been gain,
A joyous time, 'ubique, semper;'
Up-hill, down-dale, in sun or rain,
You never once were out of temper.
Whether we saw but hills and trees,
Or some quaint touch of German manners,
You always were the first to seize
On what best suited tourist-flâneurs;
And while we wandered as we list,
We touched each subject gravely, gaily;
You call yourself 'Indifferentist,'
And I grow more a Comtist daily.
You are conservative in name,
I somewhat social-democratic,
And yet our views were much the same
Of men and things, from floor to attic.
I think, my friend, we both shall find
This lazy change from London hurry
Has shaken dust from lungs and mind,
And braced us up for work and worry.
Once said a pious dame to me,
'May all your nights have peaceful sleeping,
May peace with all your waking be,
God have you in His holy keeping!'
The words may well be not the same
With which we part, and yet, I wonder,
When each for each should wishes frame,
Would the thought prove so far asunder?

The Empress of Andorra.

ALL the troubles in Andorra arose from the fact, that the town clerk had views of his own respecting the Holy Roman Empire.

Of course everybody knows that for many centuries the Republic of Andorra, situated in an isolated valley among the Pyrenees, has enjoyed the noble and inestimable boon of autonomy. Not that the Andorrans have been accustomed to call it by that name, because, you see, the name was not yet invented; but the thing itself they have long possessed in all its full and glorious significance. The ancient constitution of the Republic may be briefly described as democracy tempered by stiletto. The free and independent citizens did that which seemed right in their own eyes; unless, indeed, it suited their convenience better to do that which seemed wrong; and, in the latter case, they did it unhesitatingly. So every man in Andorra stabbed or shot his neighbour as he willed, especially if he suspected his neighbour of a prior intention to stab or shoot *him*. The Republic contained no gallows, capital punishment having been entirely abolished, and, for the matter of that, all other punishment into the bargain. In short, the town of Andorra was really a very eligible place of residence for families or gentlemen, provided only they were decently expert in the use of the pistol.

However, in this model little Republic, as elsewhere, society found itself ranged under two camps, the Liberal and the Conservative. And lest any man should herein suspect the present veracious historian of covert satirical intent, or sly allusion to the politics of neighbouring States, it may be well to add that there was not much to choose between the Liberals and the Conservatives of Andorra.

Now, the town clerk was the acknowledged and ostensible head of the Great Liberal Party. His name in full consisted of some twenty high-sounding Spanish prenomens, followed by about the same number of equally high-sounding surnames; but I need only trouble you here with the first and last on the list, which were simply Señor Don Pedro Henriquez. It happened that Don Pedro, being a learned man, took in all the English periodicals; and so I need hardly tell you that he was thoroughly well up in the Holy Roman Empire question. He could have passed a competitive examination on that subject before Mr. Freeman, or held a public discussion with Professor Bryce himself. The town clerk was per-

fectly aware that the Holy Roman Empire had come to an end, *pro tem.* at least, in the year eighteen hundred and something, when Francis the First, Second, or Third, renounced for himself and his heirs for ever the imperial Roman title. But the town clerk also knew that the Holy Roman Empire had often lain in abeyance for years or even centuries, and had afterwards been resuscitated by some Karl (whom the wicked call Charlemagne), some Otto, or some Henry the Fowler. And the town clerk, a bold and ambitious young man, reflecting on these things, had formed a deep scheme in his inmost heart. The deep scheme was after this wise.

Why not revive the Holy Roman Empire *in Andorra*?

Nothing could be more simple, more natural, or more in accordance with the facts of history. Even Mr. Freeman could have no plausible argument to urge against it. For observe how well the scheme hangs together. Andorra formed an undoubted and integral portion of the Roman Empire, having been included in Region VII., Diocese 13 (Hispania Citerior VIII.), under the division of Diocletian. But the Empire having gone to pieces at the present day, any fragment of that Empire may re-constitute itself the whole; 'just as the tentacle of a hydra polype,' said Don Pedro (who, you know, was a very learned man), 'may re-constitute itself into a perfect animal, by developing a body, head, mouth, and foot-stalk.' (This, as you are well aware, is called the Analogical Method of Political Reasoning.) Therefore, there was no just cause or impediment why Andorra should not set up to be the original and only genuine representative of the Holy Roman Empire, all others being spurious imitations.—Q. E. D.

The town clerk had further determined in his own mind that he himself was the Karl (not Charlemagne) who was destined to raise up this revived and splendid Roman Empire. He had already struck coins in imagination, bearing on the obverse his image and superscription, and the proud title 'Imp. Petrus P. F. Aug. Pater Patriæ, Cos. XVIII. ;' with a reverse of Victory crowned, and the legend 'Renovatio Romanorum.' But this part of his scheme he kept as yet deeply buried in the recesses of his own soul.

As regards the details of this Cæsarian plan, much diversity of opinion existed in the minds of the Liberal leaders. Don Pedro himself, as champion of education, proposed that the new Emperor should be elected by competitive examination; in which case he felt sure that his own knowledge of the Holy Roman Empire would easily place him at the head of the list. But his colleague, Don Luis Dacosta, who was the Joseph Hume of Andorran politics, rather favoured the notion of sending in sealed tenders for executing the office of Sovereign, the State not binding itself to accept the

lowest or any other tender; and he had himself determined to make an offer for wearing the crown at the modest remuneration of three hundred pounds per annum, payable quarterly. Again, Don Iago Montes, a poetical young man, who believed firmly in *prestige*, advocated the idea of inviting the younger son of some German Grand-Duke to accept the Imperial Crown, and the faithful hearts of a loyal Andorran people. But these minor points could easily be settled in the future: and the important object for the immediate present, said Don Pedro, was the acceptance *in principle* of the resuscitated Holy Roman Empire.

Don Pedro's designs, however, met with considerable opposition from the Conservative party in the Folk Mote. (They called it Folk Mote, and not Cortes or Fueros, on purpose to annoy historical critics; and for the same reason they always styled their chief magistrate, not the Alcalde, but the Burgomaster.) The Conservative leader, Don Juan Pereira (first and last names only; intermediate thirty-eight omitted for want of space!) wisely observed that the good old constitution had suited our fathers admirably; that we did not wish to go beyond the wisdom of our ancestors; that young men were apt to prove thoughtless or precipitate; and finally that '*Nolumus leges Andorræ mutare.*' Hereupon, Don Pedro objected that the growing anarchy of the citizens, whose stabbings were increasing by geometrical progression, called for the establishment of a strong government, which should curb the lawless habits of the *jeunesse dorée*. But Don Juan retorted that stabbing was a very useful practice in its way; that no citizen ever got stabbed unless he had made himself obnoxious to a fellow-citizen, which was a gross and indefensible piece of incivism; and that stilettos had always been considered extremely respectable instruments by a large number of deceased Andorran worthies, whose names he proceeded to recount in a long and somewhat tedious catalogue. (This, you know, is called the Argument from Authority.) The Folk Mote, which consisted of men over forty alone, unanimously adopted Don Juan's views, and at once rejected the town clerk's Bill for the Resuscitation of the Holy Roman Empire.

Thus driven to extremities, the town clerk determined upon a *coup d'état*. The appeal to the people alone could save Andorran Society. But being as cautious as he was ambitious, he decided not to display his hand too openly at first. Accordingly he resolved to elect an Empress to begin with; and then, by marrying the Empress, to become Emperor-Consort, after which he could easily secure the Imperial crown on his own account.

To ensure the success of this excellent notion, Don Pedro

trusted to the emotions of the populace. The way he did it was simply this.

At that particular juncture, a beautiful young *prima donna* had lately been engaged for the National Italian Opera, Andorra. She was to appear as the *Grande Duchesse* on the very evening after that on which the Resuscitation Bill had been thrown out on a third reading. This amiable lady bore the name of Signorita Nora Obrienelli. She was of Italian parentage, but born in America, where her father, Signor Patricio Obrienelli, a banished Neapolitan nobleman and patriot, had been better known as Paddy O'Brien; having adopted that disguise to protect himself from the ubiquitous emissaries of King Bomba. However, on her first appearance upon any stage, the Signorita once more resumed her discarded patronymic of Obrienelli; and it is this circumstance alone which has led certain scandalous journalists maliciously to assert that her father was really an Irish chimney-sweep. But, not to dwell on these genealogical details, it will suffice to say that Signorita Nora was a beautiful young lady with a magnificent soprano voice. The enthusiastic and gallant Andorrans were already wild at the mere sight of her beauty, and expected great things from her operatic powers.

Don Pedro marked his opportunity. Calling on the *prima donna* in the afternoon, faultlessly attired in frock-coat, chimney-pot, and lavender kid gloves, the ambitious politician offered her a bouquet worth at least three-and-sixpence, accompanied by a profound bow; and enquired whether the title and position of Empress would suit her views.

'Down to the ground, my dear Don Pedro,' replied the impulsive actress. 'The resuscitation of the Holy Roman Empire has long been the dream of my existence.'

Half-an-hour sufficed to settle the details. The protocols were signed, the engagements delivered, and the fate of Andorra, with that of the Holy Roman Empire attached, trembled for a moment in the balance. Don Pedro hastily left to organise the *coup d'état*, and to hire a special body of *claqueurs* for the occasion.

Evening drew on apace, big with the fate of Pedro and of Rome. The Opera House was crowded. Stalls and boxes glittered with the partisans of the Liberal leader, the expectant hero of a revived Cæsarism. The *claque* occupied the pit and gallery. Enthusiasm, real and simulated, knew no bounds. Signorita Obrienelli was almost smothered with bouquets; and the music of catcalls resounded throughout the house. At length, in the second act, when the *prima donna* entered, crown on head and robes of state trained behind, in the official costume of the Grand-

Duchess of Gerolstein, Don Pedro raised himself from his seat and cried in a loud voice, 'Long live Nora, Empress of Andorra and of the Holy Roman Empire!'

The whole audience rose as one man. 'Long live the Empress,' re-echoed from every side of the building. Handkerchiefs waved ecstatically; women sobbed with emotion; old men wept tears of joy that they had lived to behold the Renovation of the Romans. In five minutes the revolution was a *fait accompli*. Don Juan Pereira obtained early news of the *coup d'état*, and fled precipitately across the border, to escape the popular vengeance—not a difficult feat, as the boundaries of the quondam Republic extended only five miles in any direction. Thence the broken-hearted old patriot betook himself into France, where he intended at first to commit suicide, in imitation of Cato; but on second thoughts, he decided to proceed to Guernsey, where he entered into negotiations for purchasing Victor Hugo's house, and tried to pose as a kind of pendent to that banished poet and politician.

Although this mode of election was afterwards commented upon as informal by the European Press, Don Pedro successfully defended it in a learned letter to the 'Times,' under the signature of 'Historicus Secundus,' in which he pointed out that a similar mode has long been practised by the Sacred College, who call it 'Electio per Inspirationem.'

The very next day, the Bishop of Urgel drove over to Andorra, and crowned the happy *prima donna* as Empress. Great rejoicings immediately followed, and the illuminations were conducted on so grand a scale that the single tallow-chandler in the town sold out his entire stock-in-trade, and many houses went without candles for a whole week.

Of course the first act of the grateful sovereign was to extend her favour to Don Pedro, who had been so largely instrumental in placing her upon the throne. She immediately created him Chancellor of Andorra and Prince of the Holy Roman Empire. The office of town clerk was abolished in perpetuity; while an hereditary estate of five acres was conferred upon H.E. the Chancellor and his posterity for ever.

Don Pedro had now the long-wished-for opportunity of improving the social and political position of that Andorran people whom he had so greatly loved. He determined to endow them with Primary Education, a National Debt, Free Libraries and Museums, the Income Tax, Female Suffrage, Trial by Jury, Permissive Prohibitory Bills, a Plebiscitum, an Extradition Treaty, a Magna Charta Association, and all the other blessings of modern civilisation. By these means he hoped to ingratiate himself in the public

favour, and thus at length to place himself unopposed upon the Imperial and Holy Roman throne.

His first step was the settlement of the Constitution. And as he was quite determined in his own mind that the poor little Empress should only be a puppet in the hands of her Chancellor, who was to act as Mayor of the Palace (observe how well his historical learning stood him in good stead on all occasions!), he decided that the revived Empire should take the form of a strictly limited monarchy. He had some idea, indeed, of proclaiming it as the 'Holy Roman Empire (Limited);' but on second thoughts it occurred to him that the phrase might be misinterpreted as referring to the somewhat exiguous extent of the Andorran territory: and as he wished it to be understood that the new State was an aggressive Power, which contemplated the final absorption of all the other Latin races, he wisely refrained from the equivocal title. However, he settled the Constitution on a broad and liberal basis, after the following fashion. I quote from his rough draft-sketch, the completed document being too long for insertion in full.

'The supreme authority resides in the Sovereign and the Folk Mote. The Sovereign reigns, but does not govern (at present). The Folk Mote has full legislative and deliberative powers. It consists of fourteen members, chosen from the fourteen wards of East and West Andorra. (Members for Spain, France, Portugal, and Italy may hereafter be added, raising the total complement to eighteen.) The right of voting is granted to all persons, male or female, above eighteen years of age. The executive power rests with the Chancellor of the Empire, who acts in the name of the Sovereign. He possesses a right of veto on all acts of the Folk Mote. His office is perpetual. Vivat Imperatrix!'

This Constitution was proposed to a Public Assembly or Comitia of the Andorran people, and was immediately carried *nem. con.* Enthusiasm was the order of the day: Don Pedro was a handsome young man, of personal popularity: the ladies of Andorra were delighted with any scheme of government which offered them a vote: and the men had all a high opinion of Don Pedro's learning. So nobody opposed a single clause of the Constitution on any ground.

The next step to be taken consisted in gaining the affections of the Empress. But here Don Pedro found to his consternation that he had reckoned without his hostess. It is an easy thing to make a revolution in the body politic, but it is much more serious to attempt a revolution in a woman's heart. Her Majesty's had long been bestowed elsewhere. It is true she had encouraged Don

Pedro's attentions on his first momentous visit, but that might be largely accounted for on political grounds. It is true also that she was still quite ready to carry on an innocent flirtation with her handsome young Chancellor when he came to deliberate upon matters of state, but *that* she had often done before with the lout of an actor who took the part of Fritz. 'Prince,' she would say, with one of her sunny smiles, 'do just what you like about the Permissive Prohibitory Bill, and let us have a glass of sparkling Sillery together in the Council Chamber. You and I are too young, and, shall I say, too good-looking, to trouble our poor little heads about politics and such rubbish. Youth, after all, is nothing without champagne and love!'

And yet her heart—her heart was over the sea. During one of her starring engagements among the Central American States, Signorita Obrienelli had made the acquaintance of Don Carlos Montillado, eldest son of the President of Guatemala. A mutual attachment had sprung up between the young couple, and had taken the practical form of bouquets, bracelets, and champagne suppers; but alas! the difference in their ranks had long hindered the fulfilment of Don Carlos's anxious vows. His Excellency the President constantly declared that nothing could induce him to consent to a marriage between his son and a strolling actress—in such insolent terms did the wretch allude to the future occupant of an Imperial throne! Now, however, all was changed. Fate had smiled upon the happy lovers, and Don Carlos was already on his way to Andorra as Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from the Guatemalan Republic to the renovated Empire. The poor Chancellor discovered too late that he had baited a hook for his own destruction.

However, he did not yet despair. To be sure the Empress, young, beautiful, and with a magnificent soprano voice, had seated herself firmly in the hearts of her susceptible subjects. Besides, her engaging manners, marked by all the charming *abandon* of the stage, allowed her to make conquests freely among her lieges, each of whom she encouraged in turn, while smiling slyly at the discarded rivals. Still, Don Pedro took heart once more. 'Revolution enthroned her,' he muttered between his teeth, 'and counter-revolution shall disenthroner her yet. These silly people will smirk and bow while she pretends to be in love with every one of them from day to day; but when once the young Guatemalan has carried off the prize they will regret their folly, and turn to the Chancellor, whose heart has always been fixed upon the welfare of Andorra.'

With this object in view, the astute politician worked harder than ever for the regeneration of the State. His policy falls under

two heads, the External and the Internal. Each head deserves a passing mention from the laborious historian.

Don Pedro's External Policy consisted in the annexation of France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, and the amalgamation of the Latin races. Accordingly, he despatched Ambassadors to the courts of those four Powers, informing them that the Holy Roman Empire had been resuscitated in Andorra, and inviting them to send in their adhesion to the new State. In that case he assured them that each country should possess a representative in the Imperial Folk Mote on the same terms as the several wards of Andorra itself, and that the settlement of local affairs should be left unreservedly to the minor legislatures, while the Chancellor of the Empire in person would manage the military and naval forces and the general executive department of the whole Confederation. As the four Powers refused to take any notice of Don Pedro's manifesto, the Chancellor declared to the Folk Mote his determination of treating them as recalcitrant rebels, and reducing them by force of arms. However, the Andorran army not being thoroughly mobilised, and indeed having fallen into a state of considerable demoralisation, the ambitious prince decided to postpone the declaration of war *sine die*; and his Foreign Policy accordingly stood over for the time being.

Don Pedro's Internal Policy embraced various measures of Finance, Electoral Law, Public Morals, and Police Regulation.

The financial position of Andorra was now truly deplorable. In addition to the expenses of the Imperial Election, and the hire of post-horses for the Bishop of Urgel to attend the coronation, it cannot be denied that the Empress had fallen into most extravagant habits. She insisted upon drinking Veuve Clicquot every day for dinner, and upon ordering large quantities of *olives farcies* and *pâté de foie gras*, to which delicacies she was inordinately attached. She also sent to a Parisian milliner for two new bonnets, and had her measure taken for a *poult de Lyon* dress. These expensive tastes, contracted upon the stage, soon drained the Andorran Exchequer, and the Folk Mote was at its wits' end to devise a Budget. One radical member had even the bad taste to call for a return of Her Majesty's millinery bill; but this motion the House firmly and politely declined to sanction. At last Don Pedro stepped in to solve the difficulty, and proposed an Act for the Inflation of the Currency.

Inflation is a very simple financial process indeed. It consists in writing on a small piece of white paper, 'This is a Dollar,' or, 'This is a Pound,' as the case may be, and then compelling your creditors to accept the paper as payment in full for the amount

written upon its face. The scheme met with perfect success, and Don Pedro was much bepraised by the press as the glorious regenerator of Andorran Finance.

Among the Chancellor's plans for electoral reform the most important was the Bill for the Promotion of Infant Suffrage. Don Pedro shrewdly argued that if you wished to be popular in the future, you must enlist the sympathies of the rising generation by conferring upon them some signal benefit. Hence his advocacy of Infant Suffrage. In his great speech to the Folk Mote upon this important measure, he pointed out that the brutal doctrine of an appeal to force in the last resort ill befitted the nineteenth century. Many infants owned property; therefore they ought to be represented. Their property was taxed; no taxation without representation; therefore they ought to be represented. Great cruelties were often practised upon them by their parents, which showed how futile was the argument that their parents vicariously represented them; therefore they ought to be directly represented. An honourable member on the Opposition side had suggested that dogs were also taxed, and that great cruelties were occasionally practised upon dogs. Those facts were perfectly true, and he could only say that they proved to him the thorough desirability of insuring representation for dogs at some future day. But we must not move too fast. He was no hasty radical, no violent reconstructionist; he preferred, stone by stone, to build up the sure and perfect fabric of their liberties. So he would waive for the time being the question concerning the rights of dogs, and only move at present the third reading of the Bill for the Promotion of Infant Suffrage. A division was hardly necessary. The House passed the Act by a majority of twelve out of a total of fourteen members.

The Bills for the Gratuitous Distribution of Lollipops, for the Wednesday and Saturday Whole Holidays, and for the Total Abolition of Latin Grammar, followed as a matter of course. The minds of the infant electors were thus thoroughly enlisted on the Chancellor's side.

As to Moral Regeneration, that was mainly ensured by the Act for the Absolute Suppression of the Tea Trade. No man, said the Chancellor, had a right to endanger the health and happiness of his posterity by the pernicious habit of tea-drinking. Alcohol they had suppressed, and tobacco they had suppressed; but tea still remained a plague-spot in their midst. It had been proved that tea and coffee contained poisonous alkaloid principles, known as theine and caffeine (here the Chancellor displayed the full extent of his chemical learning), which were all but absolutely identical

with the poisonous principles of opium, prussic acid, and atheistical literature generally. It might be said that this Bill endangered the liberty of the subject. No man had a greater respect for the liberty of the subject than he had; he adored, he idolised, he honoured with absolute apotheosis the liberty of the subject; but in what did it consist? Not, assuredly, in the right to imbibe a venomous drug, which polluted the stream of life for future generations, and was more productive of manifold diseases than even vaccination itself. 'Tea,' cried the orator passionately, raising his voice till the fresh whitewash on the ceiling of the Council Chamber trembled with sympathetic emotion; 'Tea, forsooth! Call it rather strychnine! Call it arsenic! Call it the deadly Upas-tree of Java (*Antiaris toxicaria*, Linnæus)'—what prodigious learning!—'which poisons with its fatal breath whoever ventures to pass beneath its baleful shadow! I see it driving out of the field the harmless chocolate of our forefathers; I see it forcing its way into the earliest meal of morning, and the latest meal of eve. I see it now once more swarming over the Pyrenees from France, with Paris fashions and bad romances, to desecrate the sacred hour of five o'clock with its newfangled presence. The infant in arms finds it rendered palatable to his tender years by the insidious addition of copious milk and sugar; the hallowed reverence of age forgets itself in disgraceful excesses at the refreshment-room of railway stations. This is the ubiquitous pest which distils its venom into every sex and every age! This is the enchanted chalice of the Cathaian Circe which I ask you to repel to-day from the lips of the young, the pure, and the virtuous!'

It was an able and eloquent effort; but even the Chancellor's powers were all but overtaken in so hard a struggle against ignorance and prejudice. Unhappily, several of the members were themselves secretly addicted to that cup of five o'clock tea to which Don Pedro so feelingly alluded. In the end, however, by taking advantage of the temporary absence of three senators, who had gone to indulge their favourite vice at home, the Bill triumphantly passed its third reading by an overwhelming majority of chocolate drinkers, and became forthwith the law of the Holy Roman Empire.

Meanwhile Don Carlos Montillado had crossed the stormy seas in safety, and arrived by special mule at the city of Andorra. He took up his quarters at the Guatemalan Embassy, and immediately sent his card to the Empress and the Chancellor, requesting the honour of an early interview.

The Empress at once despatched a note requesting Don Carlos to present himself without delay in the private drawing-room of

the Palace. The happy lover and ambassador flew to her side, and for half-an-hour the pair enjoyed the delicious Paradise of a mutual attachment. At the end of that period Don Pedro presented himself at the door.

'Your Majesty,' he exclaimed in a tone of surprise, 'this is a most irregular proceeding. His Excellency the Guatemalan Ambassador should have called in the first instance upon the Imperial Chancellor.'

'Prince,' replied the Empress firmly, 'I refuse to give you audience at present. I am engaged on private business—on *strictly* private business—with his Excellency.'

'Excuse me,' said the Chancellor blandly, 'but I must assure your Majesty——'

'Leave the room, Prince,' said the Empress, with an impatient gesture. 'Leave the room at once!'

'Leave the room, fellow, when a lady speaks to you,' cried the impetuous young Guatemalan, drawing his sword, and pushing Don Pedro bodily out of the door.

The die was cast. The Rubicon was crossed. Don Pedro determined on a counter-revolution, and waited for his revenge. Nor had he long to wait.

Half-an-hour later, as Don Carlos was passing out of the Palace on his way home to dress for dinner, six stout constables seized him by the arms, handcuffed him on the spot, and dragged him off to the Imperial prison. 'At the suit of His Excellency the Chancellor,' they said in explanation, and hurried him away without another word.

The Empress was furious. 'How dare you?' she shrieked to Don Pedro. 'What right have you to imprison him—the accredited representative of a Foreign Power?'

'Excuse me,' answered Don Pedro, in his smoothest tone. 'Article 39 of the Penal Code enacts that the person of the Chancellor is sacred, and that any individual who violently assaults him, with arms in hand, may be immediately committed to prison without trial, by Her Majesty's command. Article 40 further provides that Foreign Ambassadors and other privileged persons are not exempt from the penalties of the previous Article.'

'But, sir,' cried the angry little Empress (she was too excited now to remember that Don Pedro was a Prince), 'I never gave any command to have Don Carlos imprisoned. Release him at once, I tell you.'

'Your Majesty forgets,' replied the Chancellor quietly, 'that by Article 1 of the Constitution the Sovereign reigns but does not

govern. The prerogative is solely exercised through the Chancellor. *L'état, c'est moi!*' And he struck an attitude.

'So you refuse to let him out!' said the Empress. 'Mayn't I marry who I like? Mayn't I even settle who shall be my own visitors?'

'Certainly not, your Majesty, if the interests of the State demand that it should be otherwise.'

'Then I'll resign,' shrieked out the poor little Empress, with a burst of tears. 'I'll withdraw. I'll retire. I'll abdicate.'

'By all means,' said the Chancellor coolly. 'We can easily find another Sovereign quite as good.'

The shrewd little ex-actress looked hard into Don Pedro's face. She was an adept in the art of reading emotions, and she saw at once what Don Pedro really wished. In a moment she had changed front, and stood up once more every inch an Empress. 'No, I won't!' she cried; 'I see you would be glad to get rid of me, and I shall stop here to baffle and thwart you; and I shall marry Carlos; and we shall fight it out to the bitter end.' So saying she darted out of the room, red-eyed but majestic, and banged the door after her with a slam as she went.

Henceforward it was open war between them. Don Pedro did not dare to depose the Empress, who had still a considerable body of partisans amongst the Andorran people; but he resolutely refused to release the Guatemalan legate, and decided to accept hostilities with the Central American Republic, in order to divert the minds of the populace from internal politics. If he returned home from the campaign as a successful commander, he did not doubt that he would find himself sufficiently powerful to throw off the mask, and to assume the Imperial purple in name as well as in reality.

Accordingly, before the Guatemalan President could receive the news of his son's imprisonment, Don Pedro resolved to prepare for war. His first care was to strengthen the naval resources of his country. The Opposition—that is to say, the Empress's party—objected that Andorra had no sea-board. But Don Pedro at once overruled that objection, by dint of several parallel instances. The Province of Upper Canada (now Ontario, added the careful historical student), had no sea-board, yet the Canadians placed numerous gun-boats on the great lakes during the war of 1812. (What research!) Again, the Nile, the Indus, the Ganges, and many other great rivers had been the scene of important naval engagements as early as B.C. 1082, which he could show from the evidence of papyri now preserved in the British Museum. (What universal knowledge!) The objection was frivolous. But, an-

swered the Opposition, Andorra has neither lakes nor navigable rivers. This, Don Pedro considered, was mere hair-splitting. Perhaps they would tell him next it had no gutters or water-butts. Besides, we must accommodate ourselves to the environment. (This, you see, conclusively proves that the Chancellor had read Mr. Herbert Spencer, and was thoroughly well up in the minutiae of the Evolutionist Philosophy.) Had they never looked into their Thucydides? Did they not remember the famous *holkos*, or trench, whereby the Athenian triremes were lifted across the Isthmus of Corinth? Well, he proposed in like manner to order a large number of ironclads from an eminent Glasgow firm, to pull them overland up the Pyrenees, and to plant them on the mountain tops around Andorra as permanent batteries. That was what he meant by adaptation to the environment.

So the order was given to the eminent Glasgow firm, who forthwith supplied the Empire with ten magnificent Clyde-built ironclads, having 14-inch plates, and patent double-security rivets: mounting twelve eighty-ton guns apiece, and fitted up with all the latest Woolwich improvements. These vessels were then hauled up the mountains, as Don Pedro proposed; and there they stood, on the tallest neighbouring summits, in very little danger of going to the bottom, as the ironclads of other Powers are so apt to do. In return, Don Pedro tendered payment by means of five million pounds Inflated Currency, which he assured the eminent ship-builders were quite as good as gold, if not a great deal better. The firm was at first inclined to demur to this mode of payment; but Don Pedro immediately retorted that they did not seem to understand the Currency Question: and as this is an imputation which no gentleman could endure for a moment, the eminent ship-builders pocketed the inflated paper at once, and pretended to think no more about it.

However, there was one man among them who rather mistrusted inflation, because, you see, his education had been sadly neglected, especially as regards the works of American Political Economists, in which Don Pedro was so deeply versed. Now, this ignorant and misguided man went straight off to the Stock Exchange with his share of the five millions, and endeavoured to negotiate a few hundred thousands for pocket-money. But it turned out that all the other Stock Exchange magnates were just as ill-informed as himself with respect to inflation and the Currency Question at large: and they persisted in declaring that a piece of paper is really none the better for having the words 'This is a Pound' written across its face. So the eminent ship-builder returned home disconsolate, and next day instituted proceedings

in Chancery against the Holy Roman Empire at Andorra for the recovery of five million pounds sterling. What came at last of this important suit you shall hear in the sequel.

Meanwhile, poor Don Carlos remained incarcerated in the Imperial prison, and preparations for war went on with vigour and activity, both in Andorra and in Guatemala. Naturally, the greatest excitement prevailed throughout Europe, and especially in the sympathetic Republic of San Marino. Very different views of the situation were expressed by the various periodicals of that effusive State. The *Matutinal Agitator* declared that Andorra under the Obrienelli dynasty had become a dangerously aggressive Power, and that no peace could be expected in Europe until the Andorrans had been taught to recognise their true position in the scale of nations. The *Vespertinal Sentimentalist*, on the other hand, looked upon the Guatemalans as wanton disturbers of the public quietude, and considered Andorra in the favourable light of an oppressed nationality. The *Hebdomadal Tranquillizer*, which treated both sides with contempt—avowing that it held the Andorrans to be little better than lawless brigands, in the last stage of bankruptcy; and the Guatemalans to be mere drunken half-castes, incapable of attack or defence for want of men and money—this luke-warm and mean-spirited journal, I say, was treated with universal contumely as a wretched time-server, devoid of human sympathies and of proper cosmopolitan expansiveness. At length, however, through the good offices of the San Marino Government, both Powers were induced to lay aside the thought of needless bloodshed, and to discuss the terms of a mutual understanding at a Pan-Hispanic Congress to be held in the neutral metropolis of Monaco.

Invitations to attend the Congress were issued to all the Spanish-speaking nations on both sides of the Atlantic. There were a few trifling refusals, it is true, as Spain, Mexico, and the South American States declined to send representatives to the proposed meeting: but still a goodly array of plenipotentiaries met to discuss the terms of peace. Envoys from Andorra, from Guatemala, and from the other Central American Republics—one of whom was of course a Chevalier of the Exalted Order of the Holy Rose of Honduras, while another represented the latest President of Nicaragua—sat down by the side of a coloured marquis from San Domingo, and a mulatto general who presented credentials from the Republic of Cuba—since unhappily extinct. Thus it will be seen at a glance that the Congress wanted nothing which could add to its imposing character, either as an International Parliament or as an expression of military Pan-Hispanic

force. Europe felt instinctively that its deliberations were backed up by all the vast terrestrial and naval armaments of its constituent Powers.

But while Don Pedro was pulling the wires of the Monaco convention (by telegraph) from his head-quarters at Andorra—he could not himself have attended its meeting, lest his august Sovereign should embrace the opportunity of releasing the captive Guatemalan and so stopping his hopes of future success—he had to contend at home, not only with the covert opposition of the brave little Empress, but also with the open rebellion of a disaffected minority. The five wards which constitute East Andorra had long been at secret variance with the nine wards of West Andorra; and they seized upon this moment of foreign complications to organise a Home Rule party, and set on foot a movement of secession. After a few months of mere parliamentary opposition, they broke at last into overt acts of treason, seized on three of Don Pedro's ironclads, and proclaimed themselves a separate government under the title of the Confederate Wards of Andorra. This last blow almost broke Don Pedro's heart. He had serious thoughts of giving up all for lost, and retiring into a monastery for the term of his natural life.

As it happened, however, the Chancellor was spared the necessity for that final humiliation, and the Pan-Hispanic Congress was relieved of its arduous duties by the sudden intervention of a hitherto passive Power. Great Britain woke at last to a sense of her own prestige and the necessities of the situation. The Court of Chancery decided that the Inflated Currency was not legal tender, and adjudicated the bankrupt state of Andorra to the prosecuting creditors, the firm of eminent ship-builders at Glasgow. A sheriff's officer, backed by a company of British Grenadiers, was despatched to take possession of the territory in the name of the assignees, and to repel any attempt at armed resistance.

Political considerations had no little weight in the decision which led to this imposing military demonstration. It was felt that if we permitted Guatemala to keep up a squadron of ironclads in the Caribbean, a perpetual menace would overshadow our tenure of Jamaica and Barbadoes: while if we suffered Andorra to overrun the Peninsula, our position at Gibraltar would not be worth a fortnight's purchase. For these reasons the above-mentioned expeditionary force was detailed for the purpose of attaching the insolvent Empire, liberating the imprisoned Guatemalan, and entirely removing the *casus belli*. It was hoped that such prompt and vigorous action would deter the Central American States from their extensive military preparations, which had already

reached to several pounds of powder and over one hundred stand of Martini-Henry rifles.

Our demonstration was quite as successful as the 'little wars' of Great Britain have always been. Don Pedro made some show of resistance with his eighty-ton guns: but finding that the contractors had only supplied them with wooden bores, he deemed it prudent at length to beat a precipitate retreat. As to the poor little Empress, she had long learned to regard herself as a cypher in the realm over which she reigned but did not govern; and she was therefore perfectly ready to abdicate the throne, and resign the crown jewels to the sheriff's officer. She did so with the less regret, because the crown was only aluminium, and the jewels only paste—being, in fact, the identical articles which she had worn in her theatrical character as the Grand-Duchess of Gerolstein. The quondam republic was far from rich, and it had been glad to purchase these convenient regalia from the property-man at the theatre on the eventful morning of the Imperial Coronation.

Don Carlos was immediately liberated by the victorious troops, and rushed at once into the arms of his inamorata. The Bishop of Urgel married them as private persons on the very same afternoon. The ex-Empress returned to the stage and made her first re-appearance in London, where the history of her misfortunes, and the sympathy which the British nation always extends to the conquered, rapidly secured her an unbounded popularity. Don Carlos practised with success on the violin, and joined the orchestra at the same house where his happy little wife appeared as *prima donna*. Senor Montillado the elder at first announced his intention of cutting off his son with a shilling; but being shortly after expelled from the Presidency of the Guatemalan Republic by one of the triennial revolutions which periodically diversify life in that volcanic state, he changed his mind, took the mail steamer to Southampton, and obtained through his son's influence a remunerative post as pantaloon at a neighbouring theatre.

The eminent ship-builders took possession of East and West Andorra, quelled the insurrectionary movement of the Confederate Wards, and brought back the ten ironclads, together with the crown jewels and other public effects. On the whole, they rather gained than lost by the national bankruptcy, as they let out the conquered territory to the Andorran people at a neat little ground-rent of some 20,000*l.* per annum.

Don Pedro fled across the border to Toulouse, where he obtained congenial employment as clerk to an *avoué*. He was also promptly

elected secretary to the local Academy of Science and Art, a post for which his varied attainments fit him in the highest degree. He has given up all hopes of the resuscitation of the Holy Roman Empire, and is now engaged to a business-like young woman at the Café de l'Univers, who will effectually cure him of all lingering love for transcendental politics.

Finally, if any hypercritical person ventures to assert that this history is based upon a total misconception of the Holy Roman Empire question—that I am completely mistaken about Francis II., utterly wrong about Otto the Great, and hopelessly fogged about Henry the Fowler—I can only answer, that I take these statements as I find them in the note-books of Don Pedro, and the printed debates of the Andorran Folk Mote. Like a veracious historian, I cannot go beyond my authorities. But I think you will agree with me, my courteous reader, that the dogmatic omniscience of these historical critics is really beginning to surpass human endurance.

J. ARBUTHNOT WILSON.

The Game of Bowls.

Queen. What sport shall we devise here in this garden,
To drive away the heavy thought of care?

First Lady. Madam, we'll play at bowls.

Queen. 'Twill make me think the world is full of rubs,
And that my fortune runs against the bias.

KING RICHARD II. ACT III. SC. IV.

'THERE is another recreation,' writes the author of the 'Country Gentleman's Companion,' nearly two centuries ago, 'which, howsoever unlawful in the Abuse thereof, yet, exercised with Moderation, is, even of Physicians themselves, held exceeding wholesome, and hath been prescribed for a Recreation to great Persons.' The amusement that thus received the approval of the Faculty was the old English game of Bowling, a fine old pastime too much neglected in its old home in these days of violent athletic exercises. It is a game peculiarly English, being one of the few amusements we owe to native invention.

Strutt declared himself unable 'by any means to ascertain the time of its introduction,' though he has traced it back to the thirteenth century. A writer in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' however, has gone further back than this, and has pretty conclusively proved that the 'in jactu lapidum,' which William FitzStephen includes among the amusements practised by the young Londoners of the twelfth century on summer holidays, refers to bowls and not to slinging stones, as has been generally understood. However this may be, it is clear the game is a very old one, though from the early drawings of players we see that it, like most of our pastimes, has passed through various changes and modifications in its long career. In the earliest of these representations of the game—a drawing in a MS. in the Royal Library, which is reproduced by Strutt—two small cones are placed upright at a distance from each other; and the business of the players is evidently to bowl at them alternately; the successful candidate being he who could lay his bowl the nearest to this mark.' In others of these delineations, in which the attitudes of the bowlers are given with remarkable spirit and effect, we find other varieties of the game—such as one player being required by the game not to lay his bowl close to a mark, but to strike away from its place the sphere cast by his opponent.

In process of time the third ball, or jack, of smaller size than

the playing bowls, was introduced to serve as a mark towards which to direct the bowls, and from then the principal changes in the game were probably only in the number of bowls allowed to each player, and in their material and shape. In the old drawings, instead of using two balls, as in the modern game, the player is provided with one only. The bowls were round, and certainly up to 1409, and most probably for long after, were made of stone. As we shall see, stone bowls were used in Scotland pretty commonly till about the end of the seventeenth century; in 1657 Lord Lorn, son of the Marquis of Argyll, was struck senseless by one of these 'stone bullets' in Edinburgh Castle, and continued in danger of his life for some time.

It seems clear that this game was originally played on open greens, more or less made smooth and prepared for the pastimes. These greens, however, being without cover, necessarily restricted the enjoyment of the game to the dry days of the warmer months of the year, and this naturally suggested the idea of making covered alleys, where the ground, being roofed over might be used when the state of the weather would not permit the pursuit of the pastime outside. Unfortunately for the fair fame of Bowls, these alleys became the haunts of idle and dissolute persons, and the discredit that fairly enough attached itself to them was extended to this innocent and healthful recreation as practised on the green in the open air. This discreditable relation it was that brought down on lawn bowls the pains and penalties fulminated against it by so many statutes from Richard II.'s time till 2 Geo. II. c. 28—though, no doubt, its own popularity, and the consequent interference with the due practice of the all-important Archery, had caused it before then to be classed in the Close Roll of Edward III. in 1366 with other 'games alike dishonourable, useless, and unprofitable' that absorbed too much of the leisure time of the king's famous bowmen.

The name 'Bowls' first occurs in an Act of Henry VIII. in 1511, where, and in a subsequent Act thirty years later, various 'artificers, husbandmen, apprentices,' and others of the lower classes are prohibited on pain of 20s. from playing at '. . . bowls . . . or other unlawful games out of Christmas, and in Christmas may play thereat in their master's houses or presence, and no person shall play at bowls in open places out of his garden or orchard under pain of 6s. 8d.;' but these laws must have been systematically broken, for many old writers deplore the excessive number of bowling alleys and the evil effects arising from them. Stephen Gosson, in his 'School of Abuse' (1579), speaking of the 'wonderful change when . . . our courage is turned to cowardice,

our running to ryot, our bowes into bowls, and our darts into dishes,' says that 'common bowling-alleys are privy mothes that eat up the credit of many idle citizens, whose gaynes at home are not able to weigh downe theyr losses abroad; whose shoppes are so farre from maintaining their play that theyr wives and children cry out for bread, and go to bedde supperlesse ofte in the yeere.' Stowe, too, laments the closing up for building purposes of the common grounds, before then appropriated to open air amusements, which began to take place in his day, and which drove the citizens for amusement 'into bowling alleys and ordinarie diceing houses neer home, where they have room enough to hazard their money at unlawful games.'

Up to the time of Henry VIII., bowling, both in greens and alleys, seems to have been an amusement little played except by the lower classes; but not only did that bluff monarch add to Whitehall 'divers fair tennice courts, bowling alleys, and a cock-pit,' but bowling greens began to be looked on as indispensable in the laying out of gentlemen's gardens. 'Though gardening and horticulture in general, as arts,' says Mr. Wright in his 'History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments,' 'were undergoing considerable improvement during this period, the garden itself appears to have been much more neglected, except as far as it was the scene of other pastimes. A bowling green was the most important part of the pleasure garden in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and bowls and exercises of a similar character, were the favourite amusements of all classes.'

Of all the English kings Charles I. was the greatest enthusiast in our game. Many anecdotes are told of his great love for it, a love that survived through all his troubles, for we find him alike devoting himself to it while in power and solacing himself with it while a captive.

Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas—'Curl's Corinna,' as Pope calls her, when impaling her in the 'Dunciad' for selling to Curl some boyish letters of his to Henry Cromwell—in her autobiographic volumes, 'Pylades and Corinna,' speaks of a house at Barking, called Barking Hall, which once belonged to her great-great-grandfather, Richard Shute, Turkey merchant, and Member of Parliament for the City of London in Charles I.'s time. According to her description, it was situated at the end of a long avenue of elms, and was an antique building of a castellated form. In the grounds of this house Mr. Shute made one of the prettiest and most commodious bowling greens that had ever been seen. King Charles, Mrs. Thomas tells us, having heard of this fine new bowling green, and being very partial to the amusement, told Mr. Shute

when he next came to Court that he would dine with him the following day at Barking, and try his skill at bowls. Mr. Shute made the best preparation that the shortness of the warning would allow, and King Charles was so well pleased with his reception and entertainment that, frequently afterwards, he would lay aside all state and repair to Barking Hall, with only two or three gentlemen as attendants, that he might enjoy a game on Mr. Shute's unrivalled lawn. They generally played high, continues Corinna, and punctually paid the losings, and though Mr. Shute often won, yet the king would at one time bet higher than usual, till, having lost several games, he gave off. 'And if it please your Majesty,' answered Mr. Shute, when asked what he had won, '1,000*l.*,' and then he asked the king to play some rubbers more, as perhaps luck might turn. 'No, Shute,' replied the king, laying his hand gently on his shoulder, 'thou hast won the day, and much good may it do thee; but I must remember I have a wife and children.'

Charles is said to have been playing at bowls when seized by Cornet Joyce, and frequently during his captivity we find him engaged in the game. While at Holmby in Northamptonshire he often went over to Lord Vaux's at Harrowden, and to Earl Spencer's at Althorpe, 'both of which seats possessed unrivalled bowling greens.'

A correspondent of 'Notes and Queries,' in a note on some tavern signs, tells of this tradition of the unfortunate king and his love for our game:—'In a secluded part of the Oxfordshire hills, at a place called Collins' End, situated between Hardwicke House and Goring Heath, is a neat little rustic inn, having for its sign a well executed portrait of Charles I. There is a tradition that this unfortunate monarch, while residing as a prisoner at Caversham, rode one day, attended by an escort, into this part of the country, and hearing that there was a bowling green at this inn, frequented by the neighbouring gentry, struck down to the house and endeavoured to forget his sorrows for a while in a game at bowls. This circumstance is alluded to in the following lines, written beneath the sign-board:—

Stop, traveller, stop! in yonder peaceful glade
His favourite game the royal martyr played;
Here, stripped of honours, children, freedom, rank,
Drank from the bowl, and bowl'd for what he drank;
Sought in a cheerful glass his cares to drown,
And changed his guinea ere he lost his crown.

'The sign,' continues the writer, 'which seems to be a copy from Vandyke, though much faded from exposure to the weather,

evidently displays an amount of artistic skill that is not usually found among common sign-board painters. I once made some inquiries about it of the people of the house, but the only information they could give me was that they believed it to have been painted in London.'

Evelyn frequently mentions bowls and bowling greens in his 'Diary.' When describing the attractions of Swallowfield in Berkshire, he sums up his enumeration of its beauties thus:—'Also a very fine bowling green; meadow, pasture, and wood; in a word, all that can render a country seat delightful.' On several occasions, even during the game-aborring days of the Puritan rule, we find Evelyn, regardless of all risks from fierce zealots, playing bowls, not only for amusement, but for stakes! While even the starchest wearer of sad-coloured raiment might have overlooked the anxious husband beguiling the weary hours of waiting at Rye with a game,—'June 11, 1652. About 4 in the afternoon, being at bowls on the green, we discovered a vessel, which proved to be that in which my wife was, and which got into the Harbour about 8 that evening, to my no small joy,'—what would the Puritan despots have said to this indulgence in the 'unclean thing'?—'August 14, 1657. We went to Durdans [now Lord Rosebery's seat at Epsom], to a challenged match at bowls for 10*l.*, which we won.'

With the Restoration, the click of the bowl was heard again on many a green. It became a fashionable Court amusement; great attention was paid both to the manufacture of the bowls and to the preparation of the greens, whose velvety softness, and perfect level, excited the admiration of many of the foreign visitors of the day.

In July 1662 Pepys notes—'Whitehall gardens and the Bowling Alley (where lords and ladies are now at bowles) in brave condition;' while on another occasion he and some friends, being on an excursion, got 'up early and bated at Petersfield, in the room which the king lay in lately at his being there. Here very merry and played with our wives at bowles.' It is in the Grammont 'Memoirs,' however, that we find the most complete picture of our game as a Court amusement of Charles II.'s reign. When the Court was at Tunbridge Wells,—'the place of all Europe,' we are told by De Grammont, 'the most rural and simple, and yet at the same time the most entertaining and agreeable,'—'the company are accommodated with lodgings in little, clean, and convenient habitations that lie, straggling and separated from each other, a mile and a half all round the Wells, where the company meet in

the morning. . . As soon as the evening comes, every one quits his little palace to assemble on the bowling green.'

'The game of bowls, which in France is the pastime of mechanics and servants only, is quite the contrary in England, where it is the exercise of gentlemen, and requires both art and address. It is only in use during the fair and dry part of the season, and the places where it is practised are charming, delicious walks, called bowling greens, which are little square grass plots, where the turf is almost as smooth and level as the cloth of a billiard table. As soon as the heat of the day is over, all the company assemble there; they play deep, and spectators are at liberty to make what bets they please.'

Elsewhere in the Count's 'Memoirs' we find the inhabitants of the 'little palaces' at Tunbridge using the bowling greens for another purpose:—'those who choose dance in the open air upon a turf more soft and smooth than the finest carpet in the world.'

The great John Locke, writing in 1679, says that 'the sports of England for a curious stranger to see are horse-racing, hawking, hunting, and bowling. At Marebone and Putney he may see several persons of quality bowling two or three times a week; also wrestling in Lincoln's Inn Fields every evening; bear and bull baiting in the Bear Garden; shooting with the long bow and stob ball in the Tothill Fields; and cudgel playing in the country, and hurling in Cornwall.'

While 'persons of quality' were thus casting their bowls through the statute law on the open greens, the lower orders still clung to the alleys, which receive quite as much condemnation from the moralists of this as of an earlier time. Bishop Earle devotes the whole of Essay No. XXX. of his 'Microcosmography' to the evils caused by them. 'A bowl alley,' writes the Bishop, 'is the place where there are three things thrown away besides bowls, to wit, time, money, and curses, and the last ten for one. The best sport in it is the gamester's, and he enjoys it best that looks on and bets not. It is the school of wrangling, and worse than the schools, for men will cavil here for a hair's breadth, and make a stir when a straw would end the controversy. No antick screws men's bodies into such strange flexures, and you would think them here senseless to speak sense to their bowl, and put their trust in intreaties for a good cast.'

In Scotland, as in England, the game had been played from an early date, but probably both the greens and the bowls were of a rougher type than on the south side of the Tweed. James IV. and James V. were players at bowls, as they were of most games then known, but in the general estimation 'truis', as the game

was often called, seems to have been looked upon as rather a childish pastime. Dunbar in one of his poems alludes to it in this light when he speaks of

So mony lordis, so mony naturall fulis
That better accordis to play thame at the trulis ;
Nor seis the dulis that commons dois sustene.

In process of time the game grew in popular favour, and many greens and alleys sprang up throughout the kingdom. As we have seen, it is said to have been the game at which Lord Lorn met with his severe accident in 1657 ; but this identification of the particular game is hardly borne out by the account of the mishap in the invaluable Letters of Principal Baillie of Glasgow University. Baillie, in a long letter to his cousin in Holland, giving ' a large account of our affaires this twelve moneth past ' (1657-8), says, ' My Lord Lorn, a most excellent and honest minded youth, prisoner in the castle of Edinburgh, walking about while the lieutenant of the castle with others are playing with hand bullets, one of them, rebounding off the wall, stricks him on the head, whereon he fell down dead and speechless for a long time ; his death sundry dayes was expected, but, blessed be God, I hear this day he was better.'

A few years afterwards the frequenters of bowling greens had a grievance which they brought before the Scots Parliament for redress. In 1673 two brothers, Edward and James Fountain, got a patent as ' Masters of the Revels within the Kingdom,' granting them the privilege of licensing all balls, plays, and similar entertainments. They put a wide interpretation on the wording of their grant, for within the next few years the records of the Privy Council are full of complaints by and against them. So intolerable did their exactions become to lovers of all kinds of amusements, that, Lord Fountainhall tells us, when the Scots Parliament sat in August 1681, among other proposals, ' rumoured as designed to be past in Acts,' was one complaining of ' Mr. Fountaine's gift as Master of the Revels, by which he exacts so much off every bowling green, kyle alley, &c., through the kingdom, as falling under his gift of Lotteries.' Though Parliament did nothing for the complainers then, the Lords of the Privy Council did a year or two afterwards ; and it will give an idea of the number of such places of amusement, even in those days of religious objections against pastimes, that the Fountains were said to have forced six thousand keepers of such places to compound with them, and had thus realised about 16,000*l* sterling, ' which is a most gross and manifest oppression.'

When an Act of George II. gave magistrates power to commit to prison frequenters of public bowling alleys, these went down rapidly, and greens correspondingly increased. While cricket was hardly deemed a game for gentlemen about the middle of last century, bowling was in high repute. Then

! Some Dukes at Marybone bowled time away;

while the Duchess of Devonshire of that day often watched the play of her guests at the game till 9 P.M., like the King of Hungary's daughter in the old poem, to amuse whom in her garden

An hundredth knights, truly tolde,
Shall play with bowles in alayes colde.

Rogers, in his 'Recollections,' tells of Lord Chatham and Lord Temple, while on a visit to Lord Grenville in 1767 at Wotton, Bucks, playing for an hour and a half after dinner, while 'the ladies sat by looking on and drinking their coffee, and in our walk home we stopped to regale ourselves with a syllabub under the cow.'

While bowling greens in the south of England began to be deserted about the end of last century, in the northern counties and in Scotland the game has continued to be held in high favour for a long time. In nearly every town of Scotland there is at least one bowling club and green, on which in the summer evenings elderly men, or people tired out with work, may enjoy a pleasant exercise, and one not too vehement for those even of the most sedentary habits. In Edinburgh the city has long provided public greens for the use of those not able to pay club subscriptions; and lately the Town Council has authorised a considerable additional expenditure for the same purpose in a part of the town convenient for the artisans living in the south-western districts. The game has long been a favourite in the Scottish capital. Probably the first club of which a trace exists was the society that Hugo Arnot says was 'erected by a "seal of cause" [charter of incorporation] granted by the magistrates of Edinburgh, Nov. 15, 1769. This society immediately upon its erection took from the governors of Heriot's Hospital a lease of the bowling green belonging to the Hospital for twenty-one years.' This is a much older club than the 'Willowbank,' which the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' gives as probably the first regular club founded.

R. R. MACGREGOR.

The Haunted Hotel :

A MYSTERY OF MODERN VENICE.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

(The right of translation is reserved.)

THE FOURTH PART.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was only the twentieth of September, when Agnes and the children reached Paris. Mrs. Norbury and her brother Francis had then already started on their journey to Italy—at least three weeks before the date at which the new hotel was to open for the reception of travellers.

The person answerable for this premature departure was Francis Westwick.

Like his younger brother Henry, he had increased his pecuniary resources by his own enterprise and ingenuity ; with this difference, that his speculations were connected with the Arts. He had made money, in the first instance, by a weekly newspaper ; and he had then invested his profits in a London Theatre. This latter enterprise, admirably conducted, had been rewarded by the public with steady and liberal encouragement. Pondering over a new form of theatrical attraction for the coming winter season, Francis had determined to revive the languid public taste for the ‘ballet’ by means of an entertainment of his own invention, combining dramatic interest with dancing. He was now, accordingly, in search of the best dancer (possessed of the indispensable personal attractions) who was to be found in the theatres of the Continent. Hearing from his foreign correspondents of two women who had made successful first appearances, one at Milan and one at Florence, he had arranged to visit those cities, and to judge of the merits of the dancers for himself, before he joined the bride and bridegroom. His widowed sister, having friends at Florence whom she was anxious to see, readily accompanied him. The Montbarrys remained at Paris, until it was time to present themselves at the family meeting in Venice. Henry found them still in the French capital, when he arrived from London on his way to the opening of the new hotel.

Against Lady Montbarry's advice, he took the opportunity of

renewing his addresses to Agnes. He could hardly have chosen a more unpropitious time for pleading his cause with her. The gaieties of Paris (quite incomprehensibly to herself as well as to everyone about her) had a depressing effect on her spirits. She had no illness to complain of; she shared willingly in the ever-varying succession of amusements offered to strangers by the ingenuity of the liveliest people in the world—but nothing roused her: she remained persistently dull and weary through it all. In this frame of mind and body, she was in no humour to receive Henry's ill-timed addresses with favour, or even with patience: she plainly and positively refused to listen to him. 'Why do you remind me of what I have suffered?' she asked petulantly. 'Don't you see that it has left its mark on me for life?'

'I thought I knew something of women by this time,' Henry said, appealing privately to Lady Montbarry for consolation. 'But Agnes completely puzzles me. It is a year since Montbarry's death; and she remains as devoted to his memory as if he had died faithful to her—she still feels the loss of him, as none of *us* feel it!'

'She is the truest woman that ever breathed the breath of life,' Lady Montbarry answered. 'Remember that, and you will understand her. Can such a woman as Agnes give her love or refuse it, according to circumstances? Because the man was unworthy of her, was he less the man of her choice? The truest and best friend to him (little as he deserved it) in his lifetime, she naturally remains the truest and best friend to his memory now. If you really love her, wait; and trust to your two best friends—to time and to me. There is my advice; let your own experience decide whether it is not the best advice that I can offer. Resume your journey to Venice to-morrow; and when you take leave of Agnes, speak to her as cordially as if nothing had happened.'

Henry wisely followed this advice. Thoroughly understanding him, Agnes made the leave-taking friendly and pleasant on her side. When he stopped at the door for a last look at her, she hurriedly turned her head so that her face was hidden from him. Was that a good sign? Lady Montbarry, accompanying Henry down the stairs, said, 'Yes, decidedly! Write when you get to Venice. We shall wait here to receive letters from Arthur and his wife, and we shall time our departure for Italy accordingly.'

A week passed, and no letter came from Henry. Some days later, a telegram was received from him. It was despatched from Milan, instead of from Venice; and it brought this strange message:—'I have left the hotel. Will return on the arrival of Arthur and his wife. Address, meanwhile, Albergo Reale, Milan.'

Preferring Venice before all other cities of Europe, and having arranged to remain there until the family meeting took place, what unexpected event had led Henry to alter his plans? and why did he state the bare fact, without adding a word of explanation? Let the narrative follow him—and find the answer to those questions at Venice.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Palace Hotel, appealing for encouragement mainly to English and American travellers, celebrated the opening of its doors, as a matter of course, by the giving of a grand banquet, and the delivery of a long succession of speeches.

Delayed on his journey, Henry Westwick only reached Venice in time to join the guests over their coffee and cigars. Observing the splendour of the reception rooms, and taking note especially of the artful mixture of comfort and luxury in the bedchambers, he began to share the old nurse's view of the future, and to contemplate seriously the coming dividend of ten per cent. The hotel was beginning well, at all events. So much interest in the enterprise had been aroused, at home and abroad, by profuse advertising, that the whole accommodation of the building had been secured by travellers of all nations for the opening night. Henry only obtained one of the small rooms on the upper floor, by a lucky accident—the absence of the gentleman who had written to engage it. He was quite satisfied, and was on his way to bed, when another accident altered his prospects for the night, and moved him into another and a better room.

Ascending on his way to the higher regions as far as the first floor of the hotel, Henry's attention was attracted by an angry voice protesting, in a strong New England accent, against one of the greatest hardships that can be inflicted on a citizen of the United States—the hardship of sending him to bed without gas in his room.

The Americans are not only the most hospitable people to be found on the face of the earth—they are (under certain conditions) the most patient and good-tempered people as well. But they are human; and the limit of American endurance is found in the obsolete institution of a bedroom candle. The American traveller, in the present case, declined to believe that his bedroom was in a completely finished state without a gas-burner. The manager pointed to the fine antique decorations (renewed and regilt) on the walls and the ceiling, and explained that the emanations of burning gas-light would certainly spoil them in the course of a few months. To this the traveller replied that it was possible, but that he did

not understand decorations. A bedroom with gas in it was what he was used to, was what he wanted, and was what he was determined to have. The compliant manager volunteered to ask some other gentleman, housed on the inferior upper story (which was lit throughout with gas), to change rooms. Hearing this, and being quite willing to exchange a small bedchamber for a large one, Henry volunteered to be the other gentleman. The excellent American shook hands with him on the spot. 'You are a cultured person, sir,' he said; 'and *you* will no doubt understand the decorations.'

Henry looked at the number of the room on the door as he opened it. The number was Fourteen.

Tired and sleepy, he naturally anticipated a good night's rest. In the thoroughly healthy state of his nervous system, he slept as well in a bed abroad as in a bed at home. Without the slightest assignable reason, however, his just expectations were disappointed. The luxurious bed, the well-ventilated room, the delicious tranquillity of Venice by night, all were in favour of his sleeping well. He never slept at all. An indescribable sense of depression and discomfort kept him waking through darkness and daylight alike. He went down to the coffee-room as soon as the hotel was astir, and ordered some breakfast. Another unaccountable change in himself appeared with the appearance of the meal. He was absolutely without appetite. An excellent omelette and cutlets cooked to perfection, he sent away untasted—he, whose appetite never failed him, whose digestion was still equal to any demands on it!

The day was bright and fine. He sent for a gondola, and was rowed to the Lido.

Out on the airy Lagoon, he felt like a new man. He had not left the hotel ten minutes before he was fast asleep in the gondola. Waking, on reaching the landing-place, he crossed the Lido, and enjoyed a morning's swim in the Adriatic. There was only a poor restaurant on the island, in those days; but his appetite was now ready for anything; he eat whatever was offered to him, like a famished man. He could hardly believe, when he reflected on it, that he had sent away untasted his excellent breakfast at the hotel.

Returning to Venice, he spent the rest of the day in the picture-galleries and the churches. Towards six o'clock his gondola took him back, with another fine appetite, to meet some travelling acquaintances with whom he had engaged to dine at the table d'hôte.

The dinner was deservedly rewarded with the highest approval

by every guest in the hotel but one. To Henry's astonishment, the appetite with which he had entered the house mysteriously and completely left him when he sat down to table. He could drink some wine, but he could literally eat nothing. 'What in the world is the matter with you?' his travelling acquaintances asked. He could honestly answer, 'I know no more than you do.'

When night came, he gave his comfortable and beautiful bedroom another trial. The result of the second experiment was a repetition of the result of the first. Again he felt the all-pervading sense of depression and discomfort. Again he passed a sleepless night. And once more, when he tried to eat his breakfast, his appetite completely failed him!

This personal experience of the new hotel was too extraordinary to be passed over in silence. Henry mentioned it to his friends in the public room, in the hearing of the manager. The manager, naturally zealous in defence of the hotel, was a little hurt at the implied reflection cast on Number Fourteen. He invited the travellers present to judge for themselves whether Mr. Westwick's bedroom was to blame for Mr. Westwick's sleepless nights; and he especially appealed to a grey-headed gentleman, a guest at the breakfast-table of an English traveller, to take the lead in the investigation. 'This is Doctor Bruno, our first physician in Venice,' he explained. 'I appeal to him to say if there are any unhealthy influences in Mr. Westwick's room.'

Introduced to Number Fourteen, the doctor looked round him with a certain appearance of interest which was noticed by everyone present. 'The last time I was in this room,' he said, 'was on a melancholy occasion. It was before the palace was changed into an hotel. I was in professional attendance on an English nobleman who died here.' One of the persons present inquired the name of the nobleman. Doctor Bruno answered (without the slightest suspicion that he was speaking before a brother of the dead man), 'Lord Montbarry.'

Henry quietly left the room, without saying a word to anybody.

He was not, in any sense of the term, a superstitious man. But he felt, nevertheless, an insurmountable reluctance to remaining in the hotel. He decided on leaving Venice. To ask for another room would be, as he could plainly see, an offence in the eyes of the manager. To remove to another hotel, would be to openly abandon an establishment in the success of which he had a pecuniary interest. Leaving a note for Arthur Barville, on his arrival in Venice, in which he merely mentioned that he had gone to look at the Italian lakes, and that a line addressed to his hotel

at Milan would bring him back again, he took the afternoon train to Padua—and dined with his usual appetite, and slept as well as ever that night.

The next day, a gentleman and his wife, returning to England by way of Venice, arrived at the hotel and occupied Number Fourteen.

Still mindful of the slur that had been cast on one of his best bedchambers, the manager took occasion to ask the travellers the next morning how they liked their room. They left him to judge for himself how well they were satisfied, by remaining a day longer in Venice than they had originally planned to do, solely for the purpose of enjoying the excellent accommodation offered to them by the new hotel. 'We have met with nothing like it in Italy,' they said; 'you may rely on our recommending you to all our friends.'

On the day when Number Fourteen was again vacant, an English lady travelling alone with her maid arrived at the hotel, saw the room, and at once engaged it.

The lady was Mrs. Norbury. She had left Francis Westwick at Milan, occupied in negotiating for the appearance at his theatre of the new dancer at the Scala. Not having heard to the contrary, Mrs. Norbury supposed that Arthur Barville and his wife had already arrived at Venice. She was more interested in meeting the young married couple than in awaiting the result of the hard bargaining which delayed the engagement of the new dancer; and she volunteered to make her brother's apologies, if his theatrical business caused him to be late in keeping his appointment at the honeymoon festival.

Mrs. Norbury's experience of Number Fourteen differed entirely from her brother Henry's experience of the room.

Falling asleep as readily as usual, her repose was disturbed by a succession of frightful dreams; the central figure in everyone of them being the figure of her dead brother, the first Lord Montbarry. She saw him starving in a loathsome prison; she saw him pursued by assassins, and dying under their knives; she saw him drowning in immeasurable depths of dark water; she saw him in a bed on fire, burning to death in the flames; she saw him tempted by a shadowy creature to drink, and dying of the poisonous draught. The reiterated horror of these dreams had such an effect on her that she rose with the dawn of day, afraid to trust herself again in bed. In the old times, she had been noted in the family as the one member of it who lived on affectionate terms with Montbarry. His other sister and his brothers were constantly quarrelling with him. Even his mother owned that her eldest son

was of all her children the child whom she least liked. Sensible and resolute woman as she was, Mrs. Norbury shuddered with terror as she sat at the window of her room, watching the sunrise, and thinking of her dreams.

She made the first excuse that occurred to her, when her maid came in at the usual hour, and noticed how ill she looked. The woman was of so superstitious a temperament that it would have been in the last degree indiscreet to trust her with the truth. Mrs. Norbury merely remarked that she had not found the bed quite to her liking, on account of the large size of it. She was accustomed at home, as her maid knew, to sleep in a small bed. Informed of this objection later in the day, the manager regretted that he could only offer to the lady the choice of one other bedchamber, numbered Thirty-eight, and situated immediately over the bedchamber which she desired to leave. Mrs. Norbury accepted the proposed change of quarters. She was now about to pass her second night in the room occupied in the old days of the palace by Baron Rivar.

Once more, she fell asleep as usual. And, once more, the frightful dreams of the first night terrified her; following each other in the same succession. This time her nerves, already shaken, were not equal to the renewed torture of terror inflicted on them. She threw on her dressing-gown, and rushed out of her room in the middle of the night. The porter, alarmed by the banging of the door, met her hurrying headlong down the stairs, in search of the first human being she could find to keep her company. Considerably surprised at this last new manifestation of the famous 'English eccentricity,' the man looked at the hotel register, and led the lady upstairs again to the room occupied by her maid. The maid was not asleep, and, more wonderful still, was not even undressed. She received her mistress quietly. When they were alone, and when Mrs. Norbury had, as a matter of necessity, taken her attendant into her confidence, the woman made a very strange reply.

'I have been asking about the hotel, at the servants' supper to-night,' she said. 'The valet of one of the gentlemen staying here has heard that the late Lord Montbarry was the last person who lived in the palace, before it was made into an hotel. The room he died in, ma'am, was the room you slept in last night. Your room to-night is the room just above it. I said nothing for fear of frightening you. For my own part, I have passed the night as you see, keeping my light in, and reading my Bible. In my opinion, no member of your family can hope to be happy or comfortable in this house.'

'What do you mean?'

‘Please to let me explain myself, ma’am. When Mr. Henry Westwick was here (I have this from the valet, too) he occupied the room his brother died in (without knowing it), like you. For two nights he never closed his eyes. Without any reason for it (the valet heard him tell the gentlemen in the coffee-room) he could *not* sleep; he felt so low and so wretched in himself. And what is more, when daytime came, he couldn’t even eat while he was under this roof. You may laugh at me, ma’am—but even a servant may draw her own conclusions. It’s my conclusion that something happened to my lord, which we none of us know about, when he died in this house. His ghost walks in torment until he can tell it! The living persons related to him are the persons who feel he is near them—the persons who may yet see him in the time to come. Don’t, pray don’t stay any longer in this dreadful place! I wouldn’t stay another night here myself—no, not for anything that could be offered me!’

Mrs. Norbury at once set her servant’s mind at ease on this last point.

‘I don’t think about it as you do,’ she said gravely. ‘But I should like to speak to my brother of what has happened. We will go back to Milan.’

Some hours necessarily elapsed before they could leave the hotel, by the first train in the forenoon.

In that interval, Mrs. Norbury’s maid found an opportunity of confidentially informing the valet of what had passed between her mistress and herself. The valet had other friends to whom he related the circumstances in his turn. In due course of time, the narrative, passing from mouth to mouth, reached the ears of the manager. He instantly saw that the credit of the hotel was in danger, unless something was done to retrieve the character of the room numbered Fourteen. English travellers, well acquainted with the peerage of their native country, informed him that Henry Westwick and Mrs. Norbury were by no means the only members of the Montbarry family. Curiosity might bring more of them to the hotel, after hearing what had happened. The manager’s ingenuity easily hit on the obvious means of misleading them, in this case. The numbers of all the rooms were enamelled in blue, on white china plates, screwed to the doors. He ordered a new plate to be prepared, bearing the number, ‘13 A’; and he kept the room empty, after its tenant for the time being had gone away, until the plate was ready. He then re-numbered the room; placing the removed Number Fourteen on the door of his own room (on the second floor), which, not being to let, had not previously been numbered at all. By this device, Number Fourteen

disappeared at once and for ever from the books of the hotel, as the number of a bedroom to let.

Having warned the servants to beware of gossiping with travellers, on the subject of the changed numbers, under penalty of being dismissed, the manager composed his mind with the reflection that he had done his duty to his employers. 'Now,' he thought to himself, with an excusable sense of triumph, 'let the whole family come here if they like! The hotel is a match for them.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

BEFORE the end of the week, the manager found himself in relations with 'the family' once more. A telegram from Milan announced that Mr. Francis Westwick would arrive in Venice on the next day; and would be obliged if Number Fourteen, on the first floor, could be reserved for him, in the event of its being vacant at the time.

The manager paused to consider, before he issued his directions.

The re-numbered room had been last let to a French gentleman. It would be occupied on the day of Mr. Francis Westwick's arrival, but it would be empty again on the day after. Would it be well to reserve the room for the special occupation of Mr. Francis? and when he had passed the night unsuspectingly and comfortably in 'No. 13 A,' to ask him in the presence of witnesses how he liked his bedchamber? In this case, if the reputation of the room happened to be called in question again, the answer would vindicate it, on the evidence of a member of the very family which had first given Number Fourteen a bad name. After a little reflection, the manager decided on trying the experiment, and directed that '13 A' should be reserved accordingly.

On the next day, Francis Westwick arrived in excellent spirits.

He had signed agreements with the most popular dancer in Italy; he had transferred the charge of Mrs. Norbury to his brother Henry, who had joined him in Milan; and he was now at full liberty to amuse himself by testing in every possible way the extraordinary influence exercised over his relatives by the new hotel. When his brother and sister first told him what their experience had been, he instantly declared that he would go to Venice in the interest of his theatre. The circumstances related to him contained invaluable hints for a ghost-drama. The title occurred to him in the railway: 'The Haunted Hotel.' Post that in red letters six feet high, on a black ground, all over London—and trust the excitable public to crowd into the theatre!

Received with the politest attention by the manager, Francis met with a disappointment on entering the hotel. 'Some mistake, sir. No such room on the first floor as Number Fourteen. The room bearing that number is on the second floor, and has been occupied by me, from the day when the hotel opened. Perhaps you meant number 13 A, on the first floor? It will be at your service to-morrow—a charming room. In the mean time, we will do the best we can for you, to-night.'

A man who is the successful manager of a theatre is probably the last man in the civilized universe who is capable of being impressed with favourable opinions of his fellow-creatures. Francis privately set the manager down as a humbug, and the story about the numbering of the rooms as a lie.

On the day of his arrival, he dined by himself in the restaurant, before the hour of the table d'hôte, for the express purpose of questioning the waiter, without being overheard by anybody. The answer led him to the conclusion that '13 A' occupied the situation in the hotel which had been described by his brother and sister as the situation of '14.' He asked next for the Visitors' List; and found that the French gentleman who then occupied '13 A,' was the proprietor of a theatre in Paris, personally well known to him. Was the gentleman then in the hotel? He had gone out, but would certainly return for the table d'hôte. When the public dinner was over, Francis entered the room, and was welcomed by his Parisian colleague, literally, with open arms. 'Come and have a cigar in my room,' said the friendly Frenchman. 'I want to hear whether you have really engaged that woman at Milan or not.' In this easy way, Francis found his opportunity of comparing the interior of the room with the description which he had heard of it at Milan.

Arriving at the door, the Frenchman bethought himself of his travelling companion. 'My scene-painter is here with me,' he said, 'on the look-out for materials. An excellent fellow, who will take it as a kindness if we ask him to join us. I'll tell the porter to send him up when he comes in.' He handed the key of his room to Francis. 'I will be back in a minute. It's at the end of the corridor—13 A.'

Francis entered the room alone. There were the decorations on the walls and the ceiling, exactly as they had been described to him! He had just time to perceive this at a glance, before his attention was diverted to himself and his own sensations, by a grotesquely disagreeable occurrence which took him completely by surprise.

He became conscious of a mysteriously offensive odour in the

room, entirely new in his experience of revolting smells. It was composed (if such a thing could be) of two mingling exhalations, which were separately-discoverable exhalations nevertheless. This strange blending of odours consisted of something faintly and unpleasantly aromatic, mixed with another underlying smell, so unutterably sickening that he threw open the window, and put his head out into the fresh air, unable to endure the horribly infected atmosphere for a moment longer.

The French proprietor joined his English friend, with his cigar already lit. He started back in dismay at a sight terrible to his countrymen in general—the sight of an open window. ‘You English people are perfectly mad on the subject of fresh air!’ he exclaimed. ‘We shall catch our deaths of cold.’

Francis turned, and looked at him in astonishment. ‘Are you really not aware of the smell there is in the room?’ he asked.

‘Smell!’ repeated his brother-manager. ‘I smell my own good cigar. Try one yourself. And for Heaven’s sake shut the window!’

Francis declined the cigar by a sign. ‘Forgive me,’ he said. ‘I will leave you to close the window. I feel faint and giddy—I had better go out.’ He put his handkerchief over his nose and mouth, and crossed the room to the door.

The Frenchman followed the movements of Francis, in such a state of bewilderment that he actually forgot to seize the opportunity of shutting out the fresh air. ‘Is it so nasty as that?’ he asked, with a broad stare of amazement.

‘Horrible!’ Francis muttered behind his handkerchief. ‘I never smelt anything like it in my life!’

There was a knock at the door. The scene-painter appeared. His employer instantly asked him if he smelt anything.

‘I smell your cigar. Delicious! Give me one directly!’

‘Wait a minute. Besides my cigar, do you smell anything else—vile, abominable, overpowering, indescribable, never-never-smelt before?’

The scene-painter appeared to be puzzled by the vehement energy of the language addressed to him. ‘The room is as fresh and sweet as a room can be,’ he answered. As he spoke, he looked back with astonishment at Francis Westwick, standing outside in the corridor, and eyeing the interior of the bedchamber with an expression of undisguised disgust.

The Parisian director approached his English colleague, and looked at him with grave and anxious scrutiny.

‘You see, my friend, here are two of us, with as good noses as yours, who smell nothing. If you want evidence from more

noses, look there!’ He pointed to two little English girls, at play in the corridor. ‘The door of my room is wide open—and you know how fast a smell can travel. Now listen, while I appeal to these innocent noses, in the language of their own dismal island. My little loves, do you sniff a nasty smell here—ha?’ The children burst out laughing, and answered emphatically, ‘No.’ ‘My good Westwick,’ the Frenchman resumed, in his own language, ‘the conclusion is surely plain? There is something wrong, very wrong, with your own nose. I recommend you to see a medical man.’

Having given that advice, he returned to his room, and shut out the horrid fresh air with a loud exclamation of relief. Francis left the hotel, by the lanes that led to the Square of St. Mark. The night-breeze soon revived him. He was able to light a cigar, and to think quietly over what had happened.

CHAPTER XIX.

AVOIDING the crowd under the colonnades, Francis walked slowly up and down the noble open space of the square, bathed in the light of the rising moon.

Without being aware of it himself, he was a thorough materialist. The strange effect produced on him by the room—following on the other strange effects produced on the other relatives of his dead brother—exercised no perplexing influence over the mind of this sensible man. ‘Perhaps,’ he reflected, ‘my temperament is more imaginative than I supposed it to be—and this is a trick played on me by my own fancy? Or, perhaps, my friend is right; something is physically amiss with me? I don’t feel ill, certainly. But that is no safe criterion sometimes. I am not going to sleep in that abominable room to-night—I can well wait till to-morrow to decide whether I shall speak to a doctor or not. In the mean time, the hotel doesn’t seem likely to supply me with the subject of a piece. A terrible smell from an invisible ghost is a perfectly new idea. But it has one drawback. If I realise it on the stage, I shall drive the audience out of the theatre.’

As his strong common sense arrived at this facetious conclusion, he became aware of a lady, dressed entirely in black, who was observing him with marked attention. ‘Am I right in supposing you to be Mr. Francis Westwick?’ the lady asked, at the moment when he looked at her.

‘That is my name, madam. May I inquire to whom I have the honour of speaking?’

'We have only met once,' she answered a little evasively, 'when your late brother introduced me to the members of his family. I wonder if you have quite forgotten my big black eyes and my hideous complexion?' She lifted her veil as she spoke, and turned so that the moonlight rested on her face.

Francis recognised at a glance the woman of all others whom he most cordially disliked—the widow of his dead brother, the first Lord Montbarry. He frowned as he looked at her. His experience on the stage, gathered at innumerable rehearsals with actresses who had sorely tried his temper, had accustomed him to speak roughly to women who were distasteful to him. 'I remember you,' he said. 'I thought you were in America!'

She took no notice of his ungracious tone and manner; she simply stopped him when he lifted his hat, and turned to leave her.

'Let me walk with you for a few minutes,' she quietly replied. 'I have something to say to you.'

He showed her his cigar. 'I am smoking,' he said.


'I don't mind smoking.'

After that, there was nothing to be done (short of downright brutality) but to yield. He did it with the worst possible grace. 'Well?' he resumed. 'What do you want of me?'

'You shall hear directly, Mr. Westwick. Let me first tell you what my position is. I am alone in the world. To the loss of my husband has now been added another bereavement, the loss of my companion in America, my brother—Baron Rivar.'

The reputation of the Baron, and the doubt which scandal had thrown on his assumed relationship to the Countess, were well known to Francis. 'Shot in a gambling-saloon?' he asked brutally.

'The question is a perfectly natural one on your part,' she said, with the impenetrably ironical manner which she could assume on certain occasions. 'As a native of horse-racing England, you belong to a nation of gamblers. My brother died no extraordinary death, Mr. Westwick. He sank, with many other unfortunate people, under a fever prevalent in a Western city which we happened to visit. The calamity of his loss made the United States unendurable to me. I left by the first steamer that sailed from New York—a French vessel which brought me to Havre. I continued my lonely journey to the South of France. And then I went on to Venice.'

'What does all this matter to me?' Francis thought to himself. She paused, evidently expecting him to say something. 'So you have come to Venice?' he said carelessly. Why? 

'Because I couldn't help it,' she answered.'

Francis looked at her with cynical curiosity. 'That sounds odd,' he remarked. 'Why couldn't you help it?'

'Women are accustomed to act on impulse,' she explained. 'Suppose we say that an impulse has directed my journey? And yet, this is the last place in the world that I wish to find myself in. Associations that I detest are connected with it in my mind. If I had a will of my own, I would never see it again. I hate Venice. As you see, however, I am here. When did you meet with such an unreasonable woman before? Never, I am sure!' She stopped, eyed him for a moment, and suddenly altered her tone. 'When is Miss Agnes Lockwood expected to be in Venice?' she asked.

It was not easy to throw Francis off his balance, but that extraordinary question did it. 'How the devil did you know that Miss Lockwood was coming to Venice?' he exclaimed.

She laughed—a bitter mocking laugh. 'Say, I guessed it!'

Something in her tone, or perhaps something in the audacious defiance of her eyes as they rested on him, roused the quick temper that was in Francis Westwick. 'Lady Montbarry——!' he began.

'Stop there!' she interposed. 'Your brother Stephen's wife calls herself Lady Montbarry now. I share my title with no woman. Call me by my name before I committed the fatal mistake of marrying your brother. Address me, if you please, as Countess Narona.'

'Countess Narona,' Francis resumed, 'if your object in claiming my acquaintance is to mystify me, you have come to the wrong man. Speak plainly, or permit me to wish you good evening.'

'If your object is to keep Miss Lockwood's arrival in Venice a secret,' she retorted, 'speak plainly, Mr. Westwick, on *your* side, and say so.'

Her intention was evidently to irritate him; and she succeeded. 'Nonsense!' he broke out petulantly. 'My brother's travelling arrangements are secrets to nobody. He brings Miss Lockwood here, with Lady Montbarry and the children. As you seem so well informed, perhaps you know why she is coming to Venice?'

The Countess had suddenly become grave and thoughtful. She made no reply. The two strangely associated companions, having reached one extremity of the square, were now standing before the church of St. Mark. The moonlight was bright enough to show the architecture of the grand cathedral in its wonderful variety of detail. Even the pigeons of St. Mark were visible, in dark closely packed rows, roosting in the archways of the great entrance doors.

'I never saw the old church look so beautiful by moonlight,'

the Countess said quietly; speaking, not to Francis, but to herself. 'Good-bye, St. Mark's by moonlight! I shall not see you again.'

She turned away from the church, and saw Francis listening to her with wondering looks. 'No,' she resumed, placidly picking up the lost thread of the conversation, 'I don't know why Miss Lockwood is coming here, I only know that we are to meet in Venice.'

'By previous appointment?'

'By Destiny,' she answered, with her head on her breast, and her eyes on the ground. Francis burst out laughing. 'Or if you like it better,' she instantly resumed, 'by what fools call Chance.'

Francis answered easily, out of the depths of his strong common sense. 'Chance seems to be taking a queer way of bringing the meeting about,' he said. 'We have all arranged to meet at the Palace Hotel. How is it that your name is not on the Visitors' List? Destiny ought to have brought you to the Palace Hotel too.'

She abruptly pulled down her veil. 'Destiny may do that yet!' she said. 'The Palace Hotel?' she repeated, speaking once more to herself. 'The old hell, transformed into the new purgatory. The place itself! Jesu Maria! the place itself!' She paused and laid her hand on her companion's arm. 'Perhaps Miss Lockwood is not going there with the rest of you?' she burst out with sudden eagerness. 'Are you positively sure she will be at the hotel?'

'Positively! Haven't I told you that Miss Lockwood travels with Lord and Lady Montbarry? and don't you know that she is a member of the family? You will have to move, Countess, to our hotel.'

She was perfectly impenetrable to the bantering tone in which he spoke. 'Yes,' she said faintly, 'I shall have to move to your hotel.' Her hand was still on his arm—he could feel her shivering from head to foot while she spoke. Heartily as he disliked and distrusted her, the common instinct of humanity obliged him to ask if she felt cold.

'Yes,' she said. 'Cold and faint.'

'Cold and faint, Countess, on such a night as this?'

'The night has nothing to do with it, Mr. Westwick. How do you suppose the criminal feels on the scaffold, while the hangman is putting the rope round his neck? Cold and faint, too, I should think. Excuse my grim fancy. You see, Destiny has got the rope round *my* neck—and *I* feel it.'

She looked about her. They were at that moment close to the

famous café known as 'Florian's.' 'Take me in there,' she said; 'I must have something to revive me. You had better not hesitate. You are interested in reviving me. I have not said what I wanted to say to you yet. It's business, and it's connected with your theatre.'

Wondering inwardly what she could possibly want with his theatre, Francis reluctantly yielded to the necessities of the situation, and took her into the café. He found a quiet corner in which they could take their places without attracting notice. 'What will you have?' he inquired resignedly. She gave her own orders to the waiter, without troubling him to speak for her.

'Maraschino. And a pot of tea.'

The waiter stared; Francis stared. The tea was a novelty (in connection with maraschino) to both of them. Careless whether she surprised them or not, she instructed the waiter, when her directions had been complied with, to pour a large wine-glass-full of the liqueur into a tumbler, and to fill it up from the teapot. 'I can't do it for myself,' she remarked, 'my hand trembles so.' She drank the strange mixture eagerly, hot as it was. 'Maraschino punch—will you taste some of it?' she said. 'I inherit the discovery of this drink. When your English Queen Caroline was on the Continent, my mother was attached to her court. That much injured Royal Person invented, in her happier hours, maraschino punch. Fondly attached to her gracious mistress, my mother shared her tastes. And I, in my turn, learnt from my mother. Now, Mr. Westwick, suppose I tell you what my business is. You are manager of a theatre. Do you want a new play?'

'I always want a new play—provided it's a good one.'

'And you pay, if it's a good one?'

'I pay liberally—in my own interests.'

'If I write the play, will you read it?'

Francis hesitated. 'What has put writing a play into your head?' he asked.

'Mere accident,' she answered. 'I had once occasion to tell my late brother of a visit which I paid to Miss Lockwood, when I was last in England. He took no interest in what happened at the interview, but something struck him in my way of relating it. He said, "You describe what passed between you and the lady with the point and contrast of good stage dialogue. You have the dramatic instinct—try if you can write a play. You might make money." *That* put it into my head.'

Those last words seemed to startle Francis. 'Surely you don't want money!' he exclaimed.

'I always want money. My tastes are expensive. I have

nothing but my poor little four hundred a year—and the wreck that is left of the other money: about two hundred pounds in circular notes—no more.'

Francis knew that she was referring to the ten thousand pounds paid by the insurance offices. 'All those thousands gone already!' he exclaimed.

She blew a little puff of air over her fingers. 'Gone like that!' she answered coolly.

'Baron Rivar?'

She looked at him with a flash of anger in her hard black eyes.

'My affairs are my own secret, Mr. Westwick. I have made you a proposal—and you have not answered me yet. Don't say No, without thinking first. Remember what a life mine has been. I have seen more of the world than most people, playwrights included. I have had strange adventures; I have heard remarkable stories; I have observed; I have remembered. Are there no materials, here in my head, for writing a play—if the opportunity is granted to me?' She waited a moment, and suddenly repeated her strange question about Agnes. 'When is Miss Lockwood expected to be in Venice?'

'What has that to do with your new play, Countess?'

The Countess appeared to feel some difficulty in giving that question its fit reply. She mixed another tumbler full of the maraschino punch, and drank one good half of it before she spoke again.

'It has everything to do with my new play,' was all she said. 'Answer me.' Francis answered her.

'Miss Lockwood may be here in a week. Or, for all I know to the contrary, sooner than that.'

'Very well. If I am a living woman and a free woman in a week's time—or if I am in possession of my senses in a week's time (don't interrupt me; I know what I am talking about)—I shall go to England, and I shall write a sketch or outline of my play, as a specimen of what I can do. Once again, will you read it?'

'I will certainly read it. But, Countess, I don't understand——'

She held up her hand for silence, and finished the second tumbler of maraschino punch.

'I am a living enigma—and you want to know the right reading of me,' she said. 'Here is the reading, as your English phrase goes, in a nutshell. There is a foolish idea in the minds of many persons that the natives of the warm climates are imaginative people. There never was a greater mistake. You will find no



'Answer me.'

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such unimaginative people anywhere as you find in Italy, Spain, Greece, and the other Southern countries. To anything far removed from anything spiritual, their minds are deaf and blind by nature. Now and then, in the course of centuries, a great genius springs up among them; and he is the exception which proves the rule. Now see! I, though I am no genius—I am, in my little way (as I suppose), an exception too. To my sorrow, I have some of that imagination which is so common among the English and the Germans—so rare among the Italians, the Spaniards, and the rest of them! And what is the result? I think it has become a disease in me. I am filled with presentiments which make this wicked life of mine one long terror to me. It doesn't matter, just now, what they are. Enough that they absolutely govern me—they drive me over land and sea at their own horrible will; they are in me, and torturing me, at this moment! Why don't I resist them? Ha! but I do resist them. I am trying (with the help of the good punch) to resist them now. At intervals I cultivate the difficult virtue of sound sense. Sometimes, sound sense makes a hopeful woman of me. At one time, I had the hope that what seemed reality to me was only mad delusion, after all—I even asked the question of an English doctor! At other times, other sensible doubts of myself beset me. Never mind dwelling on them now—it always ends in the old terrors and superstitions taking possession of me again. In a week's time, I shall know whether Destiny does indeed decide my future for me, or whether I decide it for myself. In the last case, my resolution is to absorb this self-tormenting fancy of mine in the occupation that I have told you of already. Do you understand me a little better now? And, our business being settled, dear Mr. Westwick, shall we get out of this hot room into the nice cool air again?'

They rose to leave the café. Francis privately concluded that the maraschino punch offered the only discoverable explanation of what the Countess had said to him.

CHAPTER XX.

'SHALL I see you again?' she asked, as she held out her hand to take leave. 'It is quite understood between us, I suppose, about the play?'

Francis recalled his extraordinary experience of that evening in the re-numbered room. 'My stay in Venice is uncertain,' he replied. 'If you have anything more to say about this dramatic venture of yours, it may be as well to say it now. Have you decided on a subject already? I know the public taste in England

better than you do—I might save you some waste of time and trouble, if you have not chosen your subject wisely.’

‘I don’t care what subject I write about, so long as I write,’ she answered carelessly. ‘If *you* have got a subject in your head, give it to me. I answer for the characters and the dialogue.’

‘You answer for the characters and the dialogue,’ Francis repeated. ‘That’s a bold way of speaking for a beginner! I wonder if I should shake your sublime confidence in yourself, if I suggested the most ticklish subject to handle which is known to the stage? What do you say, Countess, to entering the lists with Shakespeare, and trying a drama with a ghost in it? A true story, mind! founded on events in this very city in which you and I are interested.’

She caught him by the arm, and drew him away from the crowded colonnade into the solitary middle space of the square. ‘Now tell me!’ she said eagerly. ‘Here, where nobody is near us. How am I interested in it? How? how?’

Still holding his arm, she shook him in her impatience to hear the coming disclosure. For a moment he hesitated. Thus far, amused by her ignorant belief in herself, he had merely spoken in jest. Now, for the first time, impressed by her irresistible earnestness, he began to consider what he was about from a more serious point of view. With her knowledge of all that had passed in the old palace, before its transformation into an hotel, it was surely possible that she might suggest some explanation of what had happened to his brother, and sister, and himself. Or, failing to do this, she might accidentally reveal some event in her own experience which, acting as a hint to a competent dramatist, might prove to be the making of a play. The prosperity of his theatre was his one serious object in life. ‘I may be on the trace of another “Corsican Brothers,”’ he thought. ‘A new piece of that sort would be ten thousand pounds in my pocket, at least.’

With these motives (worthy of the single-hearted devotion to dramatic business which made Francis a successful manager) he related, without further hesitation, what his own experience had been, and what the experience of his relatives had been, in the haunted hotel. He even described the outbreak of superstitious terror which had escaped Mrs. Norbury’s ignorant maid. ‘Sad stuff, if you look at it reasonably,’ he remarked. ‘But there is something dramatic in the notion of the ghostly influence making itself felt by the relations in succession, as they one after another enter the fatal room—until the one chosen relative comes who will see the Unearthly Creature, and know the terrible truth. Material for a play, Countess—first-rate material for a play!’

There he paused. She neither moved nor spoke. He stooped and looked closer at her.

What impression had he produced? It was an impression which his utmost ingenuity had failed to anticipate. She stood by his side—just as she had stood before Agnes when her question about Ferrari was plainly answered at last—like a woman turned to stone. Her eyes were vacant and rigid; all the life in her face had faded out of it. Francis took her by the hand. Her hand was as cold as the pavement that they were standing on. He asked her if she was ill.

Not a muscle in her moved. He might as well have spoken to the dead.

‘Surely,’ he said, ‘you are not foolish enough to take what I have been telling you seriously?’

Her lips moved slowly. As it seemed, she was making an effort to speak to him.

‘Louder,’ he said. ‘I can’t hear you.’

She struggled to recover possession of herself. A faint light began to soften the dull cold stare of her eyes. In a moment more she spoke so that he could hear her.

‘I never thought of the other world,’ she murmured, in low dull tones, like a woman talking in her sleep.

Her mind had gone back to the day of her last memorable interview with Agnes; she was slowly recalling the confession that had escaped her, the warning words which she had spoken at that past time. Necessarily incapable of understanding this, Francis looked at her in perplexity. She went on in the same dull vacant tone, steadily following out her own train of thought, with her heedless eyes on his face, and her wandering mind far away from him.

‘I said some trifling event would bring us together the next time. I was wrong. No trifling event will bring us together. I said I might be the person who told her what had become of Ferrari, if she forced me to it. Shall I feel some other influence than hers? Will *he* force me to it? When *she* sees him, shall I see him too?’

Her head sank a little; her heavy eyelids dropped slowly; she heaved a long low weary sigh. Francis put her arm in his, and made an attempt to rouse her.

‘Come, Countess, you are weary and over-wrought. We have had enough talking to-night. Let me see you safe back to your hotel. Is it far from here?’

She started when he moved, and obliged her to move with him, as if he had suddenly awakened her out of a deep sleep.

'Not far,' she said faintly. 'The old hotel on the quay. My mind's in a strange state; I have forgotten the name.'

'Danieli's?'

'Yes!'

He led her on slowly. She accompanied him in silence as far as the end of the Piazzetta. There, when the full view of the moonlit Lagoon revealed itself, she stopped him as he turned towards the Riva degli Schiavoni. 'I have something to ask you. I want to wait and think.'

She recovered her lost idea, after a long pause.

'Are you going to sleep in the room to-night?' she asked.

He told her that another traveller was in possession of the room that night. 'But the manager has reserved it for me to-morrow, he added, 'if I wish to have it.'

'No,' she said. 'You must give it up.'

'To whom?'

'To me!'

He started. 'After what I have told you, do you really wish to sleep in that room to-morrow night?'

'I *must* sleep in it.'

'Are you not afraid?'

'I am horribly afraid.'

'So I should have thought, after what I have observed in you to-night. Why should you take the room? you are not obliged to occupy it, unless you like.'

'I was not obliged to go to Venice, when I left America,' she answered. 'And yet I came here. I must take the room, and keep the room, until—' She broke off at those words. 'Never mind the rest,' she said. 'It doesn't interest you.'

It was useless to dispute with her. Francis changed the subject. 'We can do nothing to-night,' he said. 'I will call on you to-morrow morning, and hear what you think of it then.'

They moved on again to the hotel. As they approached the door, Francis asked if she was staying in Venice under her own name.

She shook her head. 'As your brother's widow, I am known here. As Countess Narona, I am known here. I want to be unknown, this time, to strangers in Venice; I am travelling under a common English name.' She hesitated, and stood still. 'What has come to me?' she muttered to herself. 'Some things I remember; and some I forget. I forgot Danieli's—and now I forget my English name.' She drew him hurriedly into the hall of the hotel, on the wall of which hung a list of visitors' names,

Running her finger slowly down the list, she pointed to the English name that she had assumed :—‘ Mrs. James.’

‘ Remember that when you call to-morrow,’ she said. ‘ My head is heavy. Good night.’

Francis went back to his own hotel, wondering what the events of the next day would bring forth. A new turn in his affairs had taken place in his absence. As he crossed the hall, he was requested by one of the servants to walk into the private office. The manager was waiting there with a gravely pre-occupied manner, as if he had something serious to say. He regretted to hear that Mr. Francis Westwick had, like other members of the family, discovered mysterious sources of discomfort in the new hotel. He had been informed in strict confidence of Mr. Westwick’s extraordinary objection to the atmosphere of the bedroom upstairs. Without presuming to discuss the matter, he must beg to be excused from reserving the room for Mr. Westwick after what had happened.

Francis answered sharply, a little ruffled by the tone in which the manager had spoken to him. ‘ I might, very possibly, have declined to sleep in the room, if you had reserved it,’ he said. ‘ Do you wish me to leave the hotel ?’

The manager saw the error that he had committed, and hastened to repair it. ‘ Certainly not, sir ! We will do our best to make you comfortable while you stay with us. I beg your pardon, if I have said anything to offend you. The reputation of an establishment like this is a matter of very serious importance. May I hope that you will do us the great favour to say nothing about what has happened upstairs ? The two French gentlemen have kindly promised to keep it a secret.’

This apology left Francis no polite alternative but to grant the manager’s request. ‘ There is an end to the Countess’s wild scheme,’ he thought to himself, as he retired for the night. ‘ So much the better for the Countess !’

He rose late the next morning. Inquiring for his Parisian friends, he was informed that both the French gentlemen had left for Milan. As he crossed the hall, on his way to the restaurant, he noticed the head porter chalking the numbers of the rooms on some articles of luggage which were waiting to go upstairs. One trunk attracted his attention by the extraordinary number of old travelling labels left on it. The porter was marking it at the moment—and the number was, ‘ 13 A.’ Francis instantly looked at the card fastened on the lid. It bore the common English name, ‘ Mrs. James !’ He at once inquired about the lady. She had arrived early that morning, and she was then in the Reading Room. Looking into the room, he discovered a lady in it alone. Ad-

vancing a little nearer, he found himself face to face with the Countess.

She was seated in a dark corner, with her head down and her arms crossed over her bosom. 'Yes,' she said, in a tone of weary impatience, before Francis could speak to her. 'I thought it best not to wait for you—I determined to get here before anybody else could take the room.'

'Have you taken it for long?' Francis asked.

'You told me Miss Lockwood would be here in a week's time. I have taken it for a week.'

'What has Miss Lockwood to do with it?'

'She has everything to do with it—she must sleep in the room. I shall give the room up to her when she comes here.'

Francis began to understand the superstitious purpose that she had in view. 'Are you (an educated woman) really of the same opinion as my sister's maid!' he exclaimed. 'Assuming your absurd superstition to be a serious thing, you are taking the wrong means to prove it true. If I and my brother and sister have seen nothing, how should Agnes Lockwood discover what was not revealed to Us? She is only distantly related to the Montbarrys—she is only our cousin.'

'She was nearer to the heart of the Montbarry who is dead than any of you,' the Countess answered sternly. 'To the last day of his life, my miserable husband repented his desertion of her. She will see what none of you have seen—she shall have the room.'

Francis listened, utterly at a loss to account for the motives that animated her. 'I don't see what interest *you* have in trying this extraordinary experiment,' he said.

'It is my interest *not* to try it! It is my interest to fly from Venice, and never set eyes on Agnes Lockwood or any of your family again!'

'What prevents you from doing that?'

She started to her feet and looked at him wildly. 'I know no more what prevents me than you do!' she burst out. 'Some will that is stronger than mine drives me on to my destruction, in spite of my own self!' She suddenly sat down again, and waved her hand for him to go. 'Leave me,' she said. 'Leave me to my thoughts.'

Francis left her, firmly persuaded by this time that she was out of her senses. For the rest of the day, he saw nothing of her. The night, so far as he knew, passed quietly. The next morning he breakfasted early, determining to wait in the restaurant for the appearance of the Countess. She came in and ordered her breakfast quietly, looking dull and worn and self-absorbed, as she had looked

when he last saw her. He hastened to her table, and asked if anything had happened in the night.

‘Nothing,’ she answered.

‘You have rested as well as usual?’

‘Quite as well as usual. Have you had any letters this morning? Have you heard when she is coming?’

‘I have had no letters. Are you really going to stay here? Has your experience of last night not altered the opinion which you expressed to me yesterday?’

‘Not in the least.’

The momentary gleam of animation which had crossed her face when she questioned him about Agnes, died out of it again when he answered her. She looked, she spoke, she eat her breakfast, with a vacant resignation, like a woman who had done with hopes, done with interests, done with everything but the mechanical movements and instincts of life.

Francis went out, on the customary travellers’ pilgrimage to the shrines of Titian and Tintoret. After some hours of absence, he found a letter waiting for him when he got back to the hotel. It was written by his brother Henry, and it recommended him to return to Milan immediately. The proprietor of a French theatre, recently arrived from Venice, was trying to induce the famous dancer whom Francis had engaged to break faith with him and accept a higher salary.

Having made this startling announcement, Henry proceeded to inform his brother that Lord and Lady Montbarry, with Agnes and the children, would arrive in Venice in three days more. ‘They know nothing of our adventures at the hotel,’ Henry wrote; ‘and they have telegraphed to the manager for the accommodation that they want. There would be something absurdly superstitious in our giving them a warning which would frighten the ladies and children out of the best hotel in Venice. We shall be a strong party this time—too strong a party for ghosts! I shall meet the travellers on their arrival, of course, and try my luck again at what you call the Haunted Hotel. Arthur Barville and his wife have already got as far on their way as Trent; and two of the lady’s relations have arranged to accompany them on the journey to Venice.’

Naturally indignant at the conduct of his Parisian colleague, Francis made his preparations for returning to Milan by the train of that day.

On his way out, he asked the manager if his brother’s telegram had been received. The telegram had arrived, and, to the surprise of Francis, the rooms were already reserved. ‘I thought you would

refuse to let any more of the family into the house,' he said satirically. The manager answered (with the due dash of respect) in the same tone. 'Number 13 A is safe, sir, in the occupation of a stranger. I am the servant of the Company; and I dare not turn money out of the hotel.'

Hearing this, Francis said good-bye—and said nothing more. He was ashamed to acknowledge it to himself, but he felt an irresistible curiosity to know what would happen when Agnes arrived at the hotel. Besides, 'Mrs. James' had reposed a confidence in him. He got into his gondola, respecting the confidence of 'Mrs. James.'

Towards evening on the third day, Lord Montbarry and his travelling companions arrived, punctual to their appointment.

'Mrs. James,' sitting at the window of her room watching for them, saw the new Lord land from the gondola first. He handed his wife to the steps. The three children were next committed to his care. Last of all, Agnes appeared in the little black doorway of the gondola cabin, and, taking Lord Montbarry's hand, passed in her turn to the steps. She wore no veil. As she ascended to the door of the hotel, the Countess (eyeing her through an opera-glass) noticed that she paused to look at the outside of the building, and that her face was very pale.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA.

OCTOBER 1878.

The Haunted Hotel :

A MYSTERY OF MODERN VENICE.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

(The right of translation is reserved.)

THE FOURTH PART (*continued*).—CHAPTER XXI.

LORD and Lady Montbarry were received by the housekeeper ; the manager being absent for a day or two on business connected with the affairs of the hotel.

The rooms reserved for the travellers on the first floor were three in number ; consisting of two bedrooms opening into each other, and communicating on the left with a drawing-room. Complete so far, the arrangements proved to be less satisfactory in reference to the third bedroom required for Agnes and for the eldest daughter of Lord Montbarry, who usually slept with her on their travels. The bed-chamber on the right of the drawing-room was already occupied by an English widow lady. Other bed-chambers at the other end of the corridor were also let in every case. There was accordingly no alternative but to place at the disposal of Agnes a comfortable room on the second floor. Lady Montbarry vainly complained of this separation of one of the members of her travelling party from the rest. The housekeeper politely hinted that it was impossible for her to ask other travellers to give up their rooms. She could only express her regret, and assure Miss Lockwood that her bed-chamber on the second floor was one of the best rooms in that part of the hotel.

On the retirement of the housekeeper, Lady Montbarry noticed that Agnes had seated herself apart, feeling apparently no interest in the question of the bedrooms. Was she ill ? No ; she felt a little unnerved by the railway journey, and that was all. Hearing this, Lord Montbarry proposed that she should go out with him, and try the experiment of half an hour's walk in the cool evening

air. Agnes gladly accepted the suggestion. They directed their steps towards the square of St. Mark, so as to enjoy the breeze blowing over the lagoon. It was the first visit of Agnes to Venice. The fascination of the wonderful city of the waters exerted its full influence over her sensitive nature. The proposed half-hour of the walk had passed away, and was fast expanding to half an hour more, before Lord Montbarry could persuade his companion to remember that dinner was waiting for them. As they returned, passing under the colonnade, neither of them noticed a lady in deep mourning, loitering in the open space of the square. She started as she recognised Agnes walking with the new Lord Montbarry—hesitated for a moment—and then followed them, at a discreet distance, back to the hotel.

Lady Montbarry received Agnes in high spirits—with news of an event which had happened in her absence.

She had not left the hotel more than ten minutes, before a little note in pencil was brought to Lady Montbarry by the housekeeper. The writer proved to be no less a person than the widow lady who occupied the room on the other side of the drawing-room, which her ladyship had vainly hoped to secure for Agnes. Writing under the name of Mrs. James, the polite widow explained that she had heard from the housekeeper of the disappointment experienced by Lady Montbarry in the matter of the rooms. Mrs. James was quite alone; and as long as her bed-chamber was airy and comfortable, it mattered nothing to her whether she slept on the first or the second floor of the house. She had accordingly much pleasure in proposing to change rooms with Miss Lockwood. Her luggage had already been removed, and Miss Lockwood had only to take possession of the room (Number 13, A), which was now entirely at her disposal.

‘I immediately proposed to see Mrs. James,’ Lady Montbarry continued, ‘and to thank her personally for her extreme kindness. But I was informed that she had gone out, without leaving word at what hour she might be expected to return. I have written a little note of thanks, saying that we hope to have the pleasure of personally expressing our sense of Mrs. James’s courtesy to-morrow. In the mean time, Agnes, I have ordered your boxes to be removed downstairs. Go!—and judge for yourself, my dear, if that good lady has not given up to you the prettiest room in the house!’

With those words, Lady Montbarry left Miss Lockwood to make a hasty toilet for dinner.

The new room at once produced a favourable impression on Agnes. The large window, opening into a balcony, commanded an admirable view of the canal. The decorations on the walls and

ceiling were skilfully copied from the exquisitely graceful designs of Raphael in the Vatican. The massive wardrobe possessed compartments of unusual size, in which double the number of dresses that Agnes possessed might have been conveniently hung at full length. In the inner corner of the room, near the head of the bedstead, there was a recess which had been turned into a little dressing-room, and which opened by a second door on the inferior staircase of the hotel, commonly used by the servants. Noticing these aspects of the room at a glance, Agnes made the necessary change in her dress, as quickly as possible. On her way back to the drawing-room she was addressed by a chambermaid in the corridor who asked for her key. 'I will put your room tidy for the night, Miss,' the woman said, 'and I will then bring the key back to you in the drawing-room.'

While the chambermaid was at her work, a solitary lady loitering about the corridor of the second story, was watching her over the bannisters. After a while, the maid appeared, with her pail in her hand, leaving the room by way of the dressing-room and the back stairs. As she passed out of sight, the lady on the second floor (no other, it is needless to add, than the Countess herself) ran swiftly down the stairs, entered the bed-chamber by the principal door, and hid herself in the empty side compartment of the wardrobe. The chambermaid returned, completed her work, locked the door of the dressing-room on the inner side, locked the principal entrance-door on leaving the room, and returned the key to Agnes in the drawing-room.

The travellers were just sitting down to their late dinner, when one of the children noticed that Agnes was not wearing her watch. Had she left it in her bed-chamber in the hurry of changing her dress? She rose from the table at once in search of her watch; Lady Montbarry advising her, as she went out, to see to the security of her bed-chamber, in the event of there being thieves in the house. Agnes found her watch, forgotten on the toilet table, as she had anticipated. Before leaving the room again she acted on Lady Montbarry's advice, and tried the key in the lock of the dressing-room door. It was properly secured. She left the bed-chamber, locking the main door behind her.

Immediately on her departure, the Countess, oppressed by the confined air in the wardrobe, ventured on stepping out of her hiding place into the empty room.

Entering the dressing-room, she listened at the door, until the silence outside informed her that the corridor was empty. Upon this, she unlocked the door, and, passing out, closed it again softly; leaving it to all appearance (when viewed on the inner side) as

carefully secured as Agnes had seen it when she tried the key in the lock with her own hand.

While the Montbarrys were still at dinner, Henry Westwick joined them, arriving from Milan.

When he entered the room, and again when he advanced to shake hands with her, Agnes was conscious of a latent feeling which secretly reciprocated Henry's unconcealed pleasure on meeting her again. For a moment only, she returned his look; and in that moment her own observation told her that she had silently encouraged him to hope. She saw it in the sudden glow of happiness which overspread his face; and she confusedly took refuge in the usual conventional inquiries relating to the relatives whom he had left at Milan.

Taking his place at the table, Henry gave a most amusing account of the position of his brother Francis between the mercenary opera-dancer on one side, and the unscrupulous manager of the French theatre on the other. Matters had proceeded to such extremities, that the law had been called on to interfere, and had decided the dispute in favour of Francis. On winning the victory the English manager had at once left Milan, recalled to London by the affairs of his theatre. He was accompanied on the journey back, as he had been accompanied on the journey out, by his sister. Resolved, after passing two nights of terror in the Venetian hotel, never to enter it again, Mrs. Norbury asked to be excused from appearing at the family festival, on the ground of ill-health. At her age, travelling fatigued her, and she was glad to take advantage of her brother's escort to return to England.

While the talk at the dinner-table flowed easily onward, the evening-time advanced to night—and it became necessary to think of sending the children to bed.

As Agnes rose to leave the room, accompanied by the eldest girl, she observed with surprise that Henry's manner suddenly changed. He looked serious and pre-occupied; and when his niece wished him good night, he abruptly said to her, 'Marian, I want to know what part of the hotel you sleep in?' Marian, puzzled by the question, answered that she was going to sleep, as usual, with 'Aunt Agnes.' Not satisfied with that reply, Henry next inquired whether the bedroom was near the rooms occupied by the other members of the travelling party. Answering for the child, and wondering what Henry's object could possibly be, Agnes mentioned the polite sacrifice made to her convenience by Mrs. James. 'Thanks to that lady's kindness,' she said, 'Marian and I are only on the other side of the drawing-room.' Henry made no remark; he looked incomprehensibly discontented as he opened

the door for Agnes and her companion to pass out. After wishing them good night, he waited in the corridor until he saw them enter the fatal corner-room—and then he called abruptly to his brother, ‘Come out, Stephen, and let us smoke!’

As soon as the two brothers were at liberty to speak together privately, Henry explained the motive which had led to his strange inquiries about the bedrooms. Francis had informed him of the meeting with the Countess at Venice, and of all that had followed it; and Henry now carefully repeated the narrative to his brother in all its details. ‘I am not satisfied,’ he added, ‘about that woman’s purpose in giving up her room. Without alarming the ladies by telling them what I have just told you, can you not warn Agnes to be careful in securing her door?’

Lord Montbarry replied, that the warning had been already given by his wife, and that Agnes might be trusted to take good care of herself and her little bedfellow. For the rest, he looked upon the story of the Countess and her superstitions as a piece of theatrical exaggeration, amusing enough in itself, but unworthy of a moment’s serious attention.

While the gentlemen were absent from the hotel, the room which had been already associated with so many startling circumstances, became the scene of another strange event in which Lady Montbarry’s eldest child was concerned.

Little Marian had been got ready for bed as usual, and had (so far) taken hardly any notice of the new room. As she knelt down to say her prayers, she happened to look up at that part of the ceiling above her which was just over the head of the bed. The next instant she alarmed Agnes, by starting to her feet with a cry of terror, and pointing to a small brown spot on one of the white panelled spaces of the carved ceiling. ‘It’s a spot of blood!’ the child exclaimed. ‘Take me away! I won’t sleep here!’

Seeing plainly that it would be useless to reason with her while she was in the room, Agnes hurriedly wrapped Marian in a dressing-gown, and carried her back to her mother in the drawing-room. Here, the ladies did their best to soothe and reassure the trembling girl. The effort proved to be useless; the impression that had been produced on the young and sensitive mind was not to be removed by persuasion. Marian could give no explanation of the panic of terror that had seized her. She was quite unable to say why the spot on the ceiling looked like the colour of a spot of blood. She only knew that she should die of terror if she saw it again. Under these circumstances, but one alternative was left. It was arranged that the child should pass the night in the room occupied by her two younger sisters and the nurse.

In half an hour more, Marian was peacefully asleep with her arm round her sister's neck. Lady Montbarry went back with Agnes to her room to see the spot on the ceiling which had so strangely frightened the child. It was so small as to be only just perceptible, and it had in all probability been caused by the carelessness of a workman, or by a dripping from water accidentally spilt on the floor of the room above.

'I really cannot understand why Marian should place such a terrible interpretation on such a trifling thing,' Lady Montbarry remarked.

'I suspect the nurse is in some way answerable for what has happened,' Agnes suggested. 'She may quite possibly have been telling Marian some tragic nursery story which has left its mischievous impression behind it. Persons in her position are sadly ignorant of the danger of exciting a child's imagination. You had better caution the nurse to-morrow.'

Lady Montbarry looked round the room with admiration. 'Is it not prettily decorated?' she said. 'I suppose, Agnes, you don't mind sleeping here by yourself?'

Agnes laughed. 'I feel so tired,' she replied, 'that I was thinking of bidding you good-night, instead of going back to the drawing-room.'

Lady Montbarry turned towards the door. 'I see your jewel-case on the table,' she resumed. 'Don't forget to lock the other door there, in the dressing-room.'

'I have already seen to it, and tried the key myself,' said Agnes. 'Can I be of any use to you before I go to bed?'

'No, my dear, thank you; I feel sleepy enough to follow your example. Good night, Agnes—and pleasant dreams on your first night in Venice.'

CHAPTER XXII.

HAVING closed and secured the door on Lady Montbarry's departure, Agnes put on her dressing-gown, and, turning to her open boxes, began the business of unpacking. In the hurry of making her toilet for dinner, she had taken the first dress that lay uppermost in the trunk, and had thrown her travelling costume on the bed. She now opened the doors of the wardrobe for the first time, and began to hang her dresses on the hooks in the large compartment on one side.

After a few minutes only of this occupation, she grew weary of it, and decided on leaving the trunks as they were, until the next morning. The oppressive south wind, which had blown throughout the day, still prevailed at night. The atmosphere of the room felt

close; Agnes threw a shawl over her head and shoulders, and, opening the window, stepped into the balcony to look at the view.

The night was heavy and overcast: nothing could be distinctly seen. The canal beneath the window looked like a black gulf; the opposite houses were barely visible as a row of shadows, dimly relieved against the starless and moonless sky. At long intervals, the warning cry of a belated gondolier was just audible, as he turned the corner of a distant canal, and called to invisible boats which might be approaching him in the darkness. Now and then, the nearer dip of an oar in the water told of the viewless passage of other gondolas bringing guests back to the hotel. Excepting these rare sounds, the mysterious night-silence of Venice was literally the silence of the grave.

Leaning on the parapet of the balcony, Agnes looked vacantly into the black void beneath. Her thoughts reverted to the miserable man who had broken his pledged faith to her, and who had died in that house. Some change seemed to have come over her, since her arrival in Venice; some new influence appeared to be at work. For the first time in her experience of herself, compassion and regret were not the only emotions aroused in her by the remembrance of the dead Montbarry. A keen sense of the wrong that she had suffered, never yet felt by that gentle and forgiving nature, was felt by it now. She found herself thinking of the bygone days of her humiliation almost as harshly as Henry Westwick had thought of them—she who had rebuked him the last time he had spoken slightly of his brother in her presence! A sudden fear and doubt of herself, startled her physically as well as morally. She turned from the shadowy abyss of the dark water as if the mystery and the gloom of it had been answerable for the emotions which had taken her by surprise. Abruptly closing the window, she threw aside her shawl, and lit the candles on the mantelpiece, impelled by a sudden craving for light in the solitude of her room.

The cheering brightness round her, contrasting with the black gloom outside, restored her spirits. She felt herself enjoying the light like a child!

Would it be well (she asked herself) to get ready for bed? No! The sense of drowsy fatigue that she had felt half an hour since was gone. She returned to the dull employment of unpacking her boxes. After a few minutes only, the occupation became irksome to her once more. She sat down by the table, and took up a guide-book. 'Suppose I inform myself,' she thought, 'on the subject of Venice?'

Her attention wandered from the book, before she had turned the first page of it.

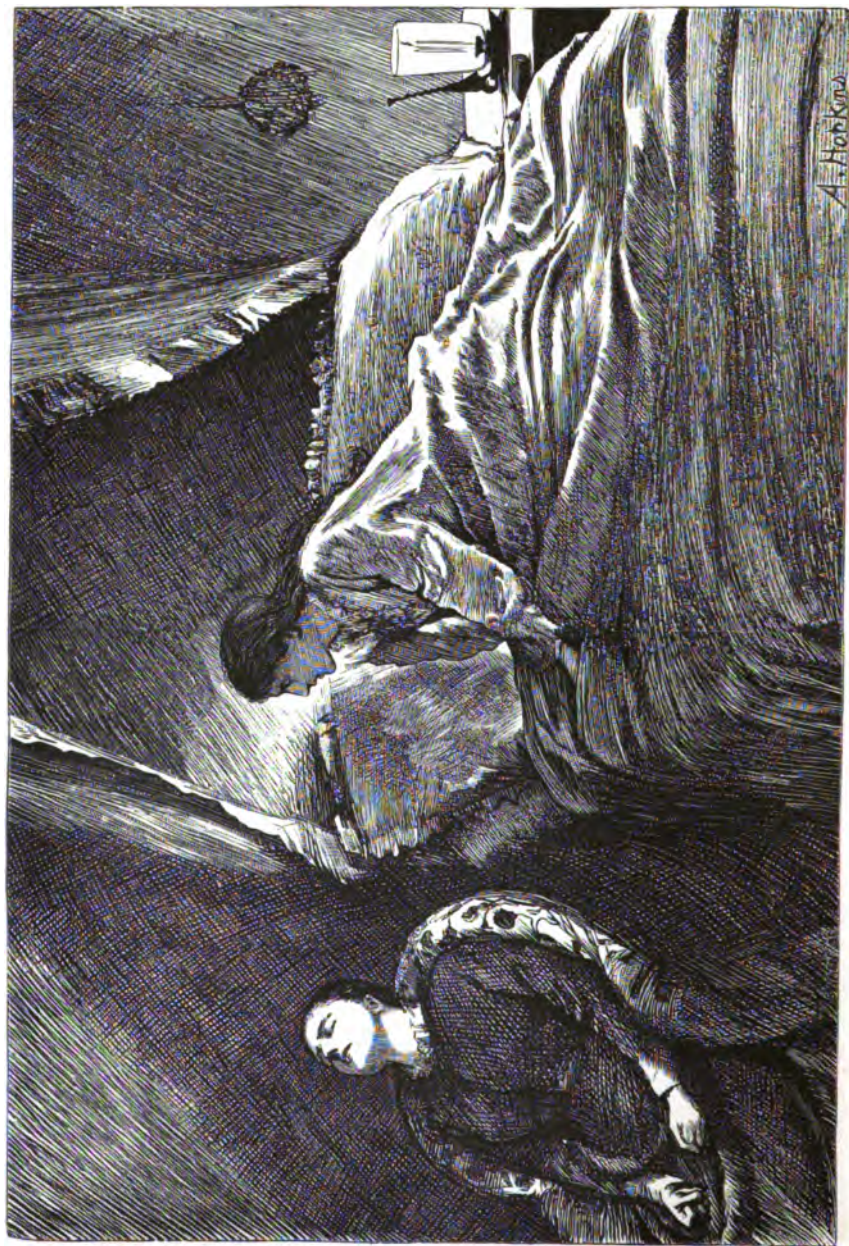
The image of Henry Westwick, was the present image in her memory now. Recalling the minutest incidents and details of the evening, she could think of nothing which presented him under other than a favourable and interesting aspect. She smiled to herself softly, her colour rose by fine gradations, as she felt the full luxury of dwelling on the perfect truth and modesty of his devotion to her. Was the depression of spirits from which she had suffered so persistently on her travels attributable, by any chance, to their long separation from each other—embittered perhaps by her own vain regret when she remembered her harsh reception of him in Paris? Suddenly conscious of this bold question, and of the self-abandonment which it implied, she returned mechanically to her book, startled by the unrestrained liberty of her own thoughts. What lurking temptations to forbidden tenderness find their hiding-places in a woman's dressing-gown, when she is alone in her room at night! With her heart in the tomb of the dead Montbarry, could Agnes even think of another man, and think of love? How shameful! how unworthy of her! For the second time, she tried to interest herself in the guide-book—and once more she tried in vain. Throwing the book aside, she turned desperately to the one resource that was left, to her luggage—resolved to fatigue herself without mercy, until she was weary enough and sleepy enough to find a safe refuge in bed.

For some little time, she persisted in the monotonous occupation of transferring her clothes from her trunk to the wardrobe. The large clock in the hall, striking midnight, reminded her that it was getting late. She sat down for a moment in an arm-chair by the bedside, to rest.

The silence in the house now caught her attention, and held it—held it disagreeably. Was everybody in bed and asleep but herself? Surely it was time for her to follow the general example? With a certain irritable nervous haste, she rose again and undressed herself. 'I have lost two hours of rest,' she thought, frowning at the reflection of herself in the glass, as she arranged her hair for the night. 'I shall be good for nothing to-morrow!'

She lit the night-light, and extinguished the candles—with one exception, which she removed to a little table, placed on the side of the bed opposite to the side occupied by the arm-chair. Having put her travelling-box of matches and the guide-book near the candle, in case she might be sleepless and might want to read, she blew out the light, and laid her head on the pillow.

The curtains of the bed were looped back to let the air pass freely over her. Lying on her left side, with her face turned away from the table, she could see the arm-chair by the dim



'She was not alone in her room!'

night-light. It had a chintz covering—representing large bunches of roses scattered over a pale green ground. She tried to weary herself into drowsiness by counting over and over again the bunches of roses that were visible from her point of view. Twice her attention was distracted from the counting, by sounds outside—by the clock chiming the half-hour past twelve; and then again, by the fall of a pair of boots on the upper floor, thrown out to be cleaned, with that barbarous disregard of the comfort of others which is observable in humanity when it inhabits an hotel. In the silence that followed these passing disturbances, Agnes went on counting the roses on the arm-chair, more and more slowly. Before long, she confused herself in the figures—tried to begin counting again—thought she would wait a little first—felt her eyelids drooping, and her head sinking gently lower and lower on the pillow—sighed faintly—and sank into sleep.

How long that first sleep lasted, she never knew. She could only remember, in the after-time, that she woke instantly.

Every faculty and perception in her passed the boundary line between insensibility and consciousness, so to speak, at a leap. Without knowing why, she sat up suddenly in the bed, listening for she knew not what. Her head was in a whirl; her heart beat furiously, without any assignable cause. But one trivial event had happened during the interval while she had been asleep. The night-light had gone out; and the room, as a matter of course, was in total darkness.

She felt for the match-box, and paused after finding it. A vague sense of confusion was still in her mind. She was in no hurry to light the match. The pause in the darkness was, strangely enough, agreeable to her.

In the quieter flow of her thoughts during this interval, she could ask herself the natural question:—What cause had awakened her so suddenly, and had so strangely shaken her nerves? Had it been the influence of a dream? She had not dreamed at all—or, to speak more correctly, she had no waking remembrance of having dreamed. The mystery was beyond her fathoming: the darkness began to oppress her. She struck the match on the box, and lit her candle.

As the welcome light diffused itself over the room, she turned from the table and looked towards the other side of the bed.

In the moment when she turned, the chill of a sudden terror gripped her round the heart, as with the clasp of an icy hand.

She was not alone in her room!

There—in the chair at the bedside—there, suddenly revealed under the flow of light from the candle, was the figure of a woman,

reclining. Her head lay back over the chair. Her face, turned up to the ceiling, had the eyes closed, as if she was wrapped in a deep sleep.

The shock of the discovery held Agnes speechless and helpless. Her first conscious action, when she was in some degree mistress of herself again, was to lean over the bed; and to look closer at the woman who had so incomprehensibly stolen into her room in the dead of night. One glance was enough: she started back with a cry of amazement. The person in the chair was no other than the widow of the dead Montbarry—the woman who had warned her that they were to meet again, and that the place might be Venice!

Her courage returned to her, stung into action by the natural sense of indignation which the presence of the Countess provoked.

‘Wake up!’ she called out. ‘How dare you come here? How did you get in? Leave the room—or I will call for help!’

She raised her voice at the last words. It produced no effect. Leaning farther over the bed, she boldly took the Countess by the shoulder and shook her. Not even this effort succeeded in rousing the sleeping woman. She still lay back in the chair, possessed by a torpor like the torpor of death—insensible to sound, insensible to touch. Was she really sleeping? Or had she fainted?

Agnes looked closer at her. She had not fainted. Her breathing was audible, rising and falling in deep heavy gasps. At intervals she ground her teeth savagely. Beads of perspiration stood thickly on her forehead. Her clenched hands rose and fell slowly from time to time on her lap. Was she in the agony of a dream? or was she spiritually conscious of something hidden in the room?

The doubt involved in that last question was unendurable. Agnes determined to rouse the servants who kept watch in the hotel at night.

The bell-handle was fixed to the wall, on the side of the bed by which the table stood.

She raised herself from the crouching position which she had assumed in looking close at the Countess; and, turning towards the other side of the bed, stretched out her hand to the bell. At the same instant, she stopped and looked upward. Her hand fell helplessly at her side. She shuddered, and sank back on the pillow.

What had she seen?

She had seen another intruder in her room.

Midway between her face and the ceiling, there hovered a human head—severed at the neck, like a head struck from the body by the guillotine.

Nothing visible, nothing audible, had given her any intelligible warning of its appearance. Silently and suddenly, the head

had taken its place above her. No supernatural change had passed over the room, or was perceptible in it now. The dumbly-tortured figure in the chair; the broad window opposite the foot of the bed, with the black night beyond it; the candle burning on the table—these, and all other objects in the room, remained unaltered. One object more, unutterably horrid, had been added to the rest. That was the only change—no more, no less.

By the yellow candlelight she saw the head distinctly, hovering in mid-air above her. She looked at it steadfastly, spellbound by the terror that held her.

The flesh of the face was gone. The shrivelled skin was darkened in hue; like the skin of an Egyptian mummy—except at the neck. There it was of a lighter colour; there it showed spots and splashes of the hue of that brown spot on the ceiling, which the child's fanciful terror had distorted into the likeness of a spot of blood. Thin remains of a discoloured moustache and whiskers, hanging over the upper lip, and over the hollows where the cheeks had once been, made the head just recognisable as the head of a man. Over all the features death and time had done their obliterating work. The eyelids were closed. The hair on the skull, discoloured like the hair on the face, had been burnt away in places. The bluish lips, parted in a fixed grin, showed the double row of teeth. By slow degrees, the hovering head (perfectly still when she first saw it) began to descend towards Agnes as she lay beneath. By slow degrees, that strange doubly-blended odour, which the Commissioners had discovered in the vaults of the old palace—which had sickened Francis Westwick in the bed-chamber of the new hotel—spread its fetid exhalations over the room. Downward and downward the hideous apparition made its slow progress, until it stopped close over Agnes—stopped, and turned slowly, so that the face of it confronted the upturned face of the woman in the chair.

After that, there came a pause. Then, a momentary movement disturbed the rigid repose of the dead face.

The closed eyelids opened slowly. The eyes revealed themselves, bright with the glassy film of death—and fixed their dreadful look on the woman in the chair.

Agnes saw that look; saw the reclining woman rise, as if in obedience to some silent command—and saw no more.

Her next conscious impression was of the sunlight pouring in at the window; of the friendly presence of Lady Montbarry at the bedside; and of the children's wondering faces peeping in at the door.

CHAPTER XXIII.

‘ . . . You have some influence over Agnes. Try what you can do, Henry, to make her take a sensible view of the matter. There is really nothing to make a fuss about. My wife’s maid knocked at her door early in the morning, with the customary cup of tea. Getting no answer, she went round to the dressing-room—found the door on that side unlocked—and discovered Agnes on the bed in a fainting fit. With my wife’s help, they brought her to herself again; and she told the extraordinary story which I have just repeated to you. You must have seen for yourself that she has been over-fatigued, poor thing, by our long railway journeys: her nerves are out of order—and she is just the person to be easily terrified by a dream. She obstinately refuses, however, to accept this rational view. Don’t suppose that I have been severe with her! All that a man can do to humour her I have done. I have written to the Countess (in her assumed name) offering to restore the room to her. She writes back, positively declining to return to it. I have accordingly arranged (so as not to have the thing known in the hotel) to occupy the room for one or two nights, and to leave Agnes to recover her spirits under my wife’s care. Is there anything more that I can do? Whatever questions Agnes has asked of me I have answered to the best of my ability; she knows all that you told me about Francis and the Countess last night. But try as I may I can’t quiet her mind. I have given up the attempt in despair, and left her in the drawing-room. Go, like a good fellow, and try what you can do to compose her.’

In those words, Lord Montbarry stated the case to his brother from the rational point of view. Henry made no remark, he went straight to the drawing-room.

He found Agnes walking rapidly backwards and forwards, flushed and excited. ‘If you come here to say what your brother has been saying to me,’ she broke out, before he could speak, ‘spare yourself the trouble. I don’t want common sense—I want a true friend who will believe in me.’

‘I am that friend, Agnes,’ Henry answered quietly, ‘and you know it.’

‘You really believe that I am not deluded by a dream?’

‘I know that you are not deluded—in one particular, at least.’

‘In what particular?’

‘In what you have said of the Countess. It is perfectly true—’

Agnes stopped him there. ‘Why do I only hear this morning

that the Countess and Mrs. James are one and the same person?' she asked distrustfully. 'Why was I not told of it last night?'

'You forget that you had accepted the exchange of rooms before I reached Venice,' Henry replied. 'I felt strongly tempted to tell you, even then—but your sleeping arrangements for the night were all made; I should only have inconvenienced and alarmed you. I waited till the morning, after hearing from my brother that you had yourself seen to your security from any intrusion. How that intrusion was accomplished it is impossible to say. I can only declare that the Countess's presence by your bedside last night was no dream of yours. On her own authority I can testify that it was a reality.'

'On her own authority?' Agnes repeated eagerly. 'Have you seen her this morning?'

'I have seen her not ten minutes since.'

'What was she doing?'

'She was busily engaged in writing. I could not even get her to look at me until I thought of mentioning your name.'

'She remembered me, of course?'

'She remembered you with some difficulty. Finding that she wouldn't answer me on any other terms, I questioned her as if I had come direct from you. Then she spoke. She not only admitted that she had the same superstitious motive for placing you in that room which she had acknowledged to Francis—she even owned that she had been by your bedside, watching through the night, "to see what you saw," as she expressed it. Hearing this, I tried to persuade her to tell me how she got into the room. Unluckily, her manuscript on the table caught her eye; she returned to her writing. "The Baron wants money," she said; "I must get on with my play." What she saw or dreamed, while she was in your room last night, it is at present impossible to discover. But judging by my brother's account of her, as well as by what I remember of her myself, some recent influence has been at work which has produced a marked change in this wretched woman for the worse. Her mind is, in certain respects, unquestionably deranged. One proof of it is that she spoke to me of the Baron as if he were still a living man. When Francis saw her, she declared that the Baron was dead, which is the truth. The United States Consul at Milan showed us the announcement of the death in an American newspaper. So far as I can see, such sense as she still possesses seems to be entirely absorbed in one absurd idea—the idea of writing a play for Francis to bring out at his theatre. He admits that he encouraged her to hope she

might get money in this way. I think he did wrong. Don't you agree with me?'

Without heeding the question, Agnes rose abruptly from her chair.

'Do me one more kindness, Henry,' she said. 'Take me to the Countess at once.'

Henry hesitated. 'Are you composed enough to see her, after the shock that you have suffered?' he asked.

She trembled, the flush on her face died away, and left it deadly pale. But she held to her resolution. 'You have heard of what I saw last night?' she said faintly.

'Don't speak of it!' Henry interposed. 'Don't uselessly agitate yourself.'

'I must speak! My mind is full of horrid questions about it. I know I can't identify it—and yet I ask myself over and over again, in whose likeness did it appear? Was it in the likeness of Ferrari? or was it——?' she stopped, shuddering. 'The Countess knows, I must see the Countess!' she resumed vehemently. 'Whether my courage fails me or not, I must make the attempt. Take me to her before I have time to feel afraid of it!'

Henry looked at her anxiously. 'If you are really sure of your own resolution,' he said, 'I agree with you—the sooner you see her the better. You remember how strangely she talked of your influence over her, when she forced her way into your room in London?'

'I remember it perfectly. Why do you ask?'

'For this reason. In the present state of her mind, I doubt if she will be much longer capable of realizing her wild idea of you as the avenging angel who is to bring her to a reckoning for her evil deeds. It may be well to try what your influence can do while she is still capable of feeling it.'

He waited to hear what Agnes would say. She took his arm and led him in silence to the door.

They ascended to the second floor, and, after knocking, entered the Countess's room.

She was still busily engaged in writing. When she looked up from the paper, and saw Agnes, a vacant expression of doubt was the only expression in her wild black eyes. After a few moments, the lost remembrances and associations appeared to return slowly to her mind. The pen dropped from her hand. Haggard and trembling, she looked closer at Agnes, and recognised her at last. 'Has the time come already?' she said in low awe-struck tones. 'Give me a little longer respite, I haven't done my writing yet!'

She dropped on her knees, and held out her clasped hands en-

treatingly. Agnes was far from having recovered, after the shock that she had suffered in the night: her nerves were far from being equal to the strain that was now laid on them. She was so startled by the change in the Countess, that she was at a loss what to say or to do next. Henry was obliged to speak to her. 'Put your questions while you have the chance,' he said, lowering his voice. 'See! the vacant look is coming over her face again.'

Agnes tried to rally her courage. 'You were in my room last night ——' she began. Before she could add a word more, the Countess lifted her hands, and wrung them above her head with a low moan of horror. Agnes shrank back, and turned as if to leave the room. Henry stopped her, and whispered to her to try again. She obeyed him after an effort. 'I slept last night in the room that you gave up to me,' she resumed. 'I saw ——'

The Countess suddenly rose to her feet. 'No more of that,' she cried. 'Oh, Jesu Maria! do you think I want to be told what you saw? Do you think I don't know what it means for you and for me? Decide for yourself, Miss. Examine your own mind. Are you well assured that the day of reckoning has come at last? Are you ready to follow me back, through the crimes of the past, to the secrets of the dead?'

She turned again to the writing-table, without waiting to be answered. Her eyes flashed; she looked like her old self once more as she spoke. It was only for a moment. The old ardour and impetuosity were nearly worn out. Her head sank; she sighed heavily as she unlocked a desk which stood on the table. Opening a drawer in the desk, she took out a leaf of vellum, covered with faded writing. Some ragged ends of silken thread were still attached to the leaf, as if it had been torn out of a book.

'Can you read Italian?' she asked, handing the leaf to Agnes.

Agnes answered silently by an inclination of her head.

'The leaf,' the Countess proceeded, 'once belonged to a book in the old library of the palace, while this building was still a palace. By whom it was torn out you have no need to know. For what purpose it was torn out you may discover for yourself, if you will. Read it first—at the fifth line from the top of the page.'

Agnes felt the serious necessity of composing herself. 'Give me a chair,' she said to Henry; 'and I will do my best.' He placed himself behind her chair so that he could look over her shoulder and help her to understand the writing on the leaf. Rendered into English, it ran as follows:—

'I have now completed my literary survey of the first floor of the palace. At the desire of my noble and gracious patron, the lord of this glorious edifice, I next ascend to the second floor, and continue my catalogue or description of

the pictures, decorations, and other treasures of art therein contained. Let me begin with the corner room at the western extremity of the palace, called the Room of the Caryatides, from the statues which support the mantel-piece. This work is of comparatively recent execution: it dates from the eighteenth century only, and reveals the corrupt taste of the period in every part of it. Still, there is a certain interest which attaches to the mantel-piece: it conceals a cleverly constructed hiding-place, between the floor of the room and the ceiling of the room beneath, which was made during the last evil days of the Inquisition in Venice, and which is reported to have saved an ancestor of my gracious lord pursued by that terrible tribunal. The machinery of this curious place of concealment has been kept in good order by the present lord, as a species of curiosity. He condescended to show me the method of working it. Approaching the two Caryatides, rest your hand on the forehead (midway between the eyebrows) of the figure which is on your left as you stand opposite to the fireplace, then press the head inwards as if you were pushing it against the wall behind. By doing this, you set in motion the hidden machinery in the wall which turns the hearthstone on a pivot, and discloses the hollow place below. There is room enough in it for a man to lie easily at full length. The method of closing the cavity again is equally simple. Place both your hands on the temples of the figure; pull as if you were pulling it towards you—and the hearthstone will revolve into its proper position again.'

'You need read no farther,' said the Countess. 'Be careful to remember what you have read.'

She put back the page of vellum in her writing-desk, locked it, and led the way to the door.

'Come!' she said; 'and see what the mocking Frenchman called "The beginning of the end."'

Agnes was barely able to rise from her chair; she trembled from head to foot. Henry gave her his arm to support her. 'Fear nothing,' he whispered; 'I shall be with you.'

The Countess proceeded along the westward corridor, and stopped at the door numbered Thirty-eight. This was the room which had been inhabited by Baron Rivar in the old days of the palace: it was situated immediately over the bedchamber in which Agnes had passed the night. For the last two days the room had been empty. The absence of luggage in it, when they opened the door, showed that it had not yet been let.

'You see?' said the Countess, pointing to the carved figure at the fire-place; 'and you know what to do. Have I deserved that you should temper justice with mercy?' she went on in lower tones. 'Give me a few hours more to myself. The Baron wants money—I must get on with my play.'

She smiled vacantly, and imitated the action of writing with her right hand as she pronounced the last words. The effort of concentrating her weakened mind on other and less familiar topics than the constant want of money in the Baron's lifetime, and the vague prospect of gain from the still unfinished play, had evidently

exhausted her poor reserves of strength. When her request had been granted, she addressed no expressions of gratitude to Agnes; she only said, 'Feel no fear, miss, of my attempting to escape you. Where you are, there I must be till the end comes.'

Her eyes wandered round the room with a last weary and stupefied look. She returned to her writing with slow and feeble steps, like the steps of an old woman.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HENRY and Agnes were left alone in the Room of the Caryatides.

The person who had written the description of the palace—probably a poor author or artist—had correctly pointed out the defects of the mantel-piece. Bad taste, exhibiting itself on the most costly and splendid scale, was visible in every part of the work. It was nevertheless greatly admired by ignorant travellers of all classes; partly on account of its imposing size, and partly on account of the number of variously-coloured marbles which the sculptor had contrived to introduce into his design. Photographs of the mantel-piece were exhibited in the public rooms, and found a ready sale among English and American visitors to the hotel.

Henry led Agnes to the figure on the left, as they stood facing the empty fire-place. 'Shall I try the experiment,' he asked, 'or will you?' She abruptly drew her arm away from him, and turned back to the door. 'I can't even look at it,' she said. 'That merciless marble face frightens me!'

Henry put his hand on the forehead of the figure. 'What is there to alarm you, my dear, in this conventionally classical face?' he asked jestingly. Before he could press the head inwards, Agnes hurriedly opened the door. 'Wait till I am out of the room!' she cried. 'The bare idea of what you may find there horrifies me!' She looked back into the room as she crossed the threshold. 'I won't leave you altogether,' she said, 'I will wait outside.'

She closed the door. Left by himself, Henry lifted his hand once more to the marble forehead of the figure.

For the second time, he was checked on the point of setting the machinery of the hiding-place in motion. On this occasion, the interruption came from an outbreak of friendly voices in the corridor. A woman's voice exclaimed, 'Dearest Agnes, how glad I am to see you again!' A man's voice followed, offering to introduce some friend to 'Miss Lockwood.' A third voice (which Henry recognised as the voice of the manager of the hotel) became audible next, directing the housekeeper to show the ladies and

gentlemen the vacant apartments at the other end of the corridor. 'If more accommodation is wanted,' the manager went on, 'I have a charming room to let here.' He opened the door as he spoke, and found himself face to face with Henry Westwick.

'This is indeed an agreeable surprise, sir!' said the manager cheerfully. 'You are admiring our famous chimney-piece, I see. May I ask, Mr. Westwick, how you find yourself in the hotel, this time? Have the supernatural influences affected your appetite again?'

'The supernatural influences have spared me, this time,' Henry answered. 'Perhaps you may yet find that they have affected some other member of the family.' He spoke gravely, resenting the familiar tone in which the manager had referred to his previous visit to the hotel. 'Have you just returned?' he asked, by way of changing the topic.

'Just this minute, sir. I had the honour of travelling in the same train with friends of yours who have arrived at the hotel—Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Barville, and their travelling companions. Miss Lockwood is with them, looking at the rooms. They will be here before long, if they find it convenient to have an extra room at their disposal.'

This announcement decided Henry on exploring the hiding-place, before the interruption occurred. It had crossed his mind, when Agnes left him, that he ought perhaps to have a witness, in the not very probable event of some alarming discovery taking place. The too-familiar manager, suspecting nothing, was there at his disposal. He turned again to the Caryan figure, maliciously resolving to make the manager his witness.

'I am delighted to hear that our friends have arrived at last,' he said. 'Before I shake hands with them, let me ask you a question about this queer work of art here. I see photographs of it downstairs. Are they for sale?'

'Certainly, Mr. Westwick!'

'Do you think the chimney-piece is as solid as it looks?' Henry proceeded. 'When you came in, I was just wondering whether this figure here had not accidentally got loosened from the wall behind it.' He laid his hand on the marble forehead, for the third time. 'To my eye, it looks a little out of the perpendicular. I almost fancied I could jog the head just now, when I touched it.' He pressed the head inwards as he said those words.

A sound of jarring iron was instantly audible behind the wall. The solid hearthstone in front of the fire-place turned slowly at the feet of the two men, and disclosed a dark cavity below. At the same moment, the strange and sickening combination of odours,

hitherto associated with the vaults of the old palace and with the bedchamber beneath, now floated up from the open recess, and filled the room.

The manager started back. 'Good God, Mr. Westwick!' he exclaimed, 'what does this mean?'

Remembering, not only what his brother Francis had felt in the room beneath, but what the experience of Agnes had been on the previous night, Henry was determined to be on his guard. 'I am as much surprised as you are,' was his only reply.

'Wait for me one moment, sir,' said the manager. 'I must stop the ladies and gentlemen outside from coming in.'

He hurried away—not forgetting to close the door after him. Henry opened the window, and waited there breathing the purer air. Vague apprehensions of the next discovery to come, filled his mind for the first time. He was doubly resolved, now, not to stir a step in the investigation without a witness.

The manager returned with a wax taper in his hand, which he lighted as soon as he entered the room.

'We need fear no interruption now,' he said. 'Be so kind, Mr. Westwick, as to hold the light. It is *my* business to find out what this extraordinary discovery means.'

Henry held the taper. Looking into the cavity, by the dim and flickering light, they both detected a dark object at the bottom of it. 'I think I can reach the thing,' the manager remarked, 'if I lie down, and put my hand into the hole.'

He knelt on the floor—and hesitated. 'Might I ask you, sir, to give me my gloves?' he said. 'They are in my hat, on the chair behind you.'

Henry gave him the gloves. 'I don't know what I may be going to take hold of,' the manager explained, smiling rather uneasily as he put on his right glove.

He stretched himself at full length on the floor, and passed his right arm into the cavity. 'I can't say exactly what I have got hold of,' he said. 'But I have got it.'

Half raising himself, he drew his hand out.

The next instant, he started to his feet with a shriek of terror. A human head dropped from his nerveless grasp on the floor, and rolled to Henry's feet. It was the hideous head that Agnes had seen hovering above her, in the vision of the night!

The two men looked at each other, both struck speechless by the same emotion of horror. The manager was the first to control himself. 'See to the door, for God's sake!' he said. 'Some of the people outside may have heard me.'

Henry moved mechanically to the door,

Even when he had his hand on the key, ready to turn it in the lock in case of necessity, he still looked back at the appalling object on the floor. There was no possibility of identifying those decayed and distorted features with any living creature whom he had seen—and yet, he was conscious of feeling a vague and awful doubt which shook him to the soul. The questions which had tortured the mind of Agnes, were now *his* questions too. *He* asked himself, ‘In whose likeness might I have recognised it before the decay set in? The likeness of Ferrari? or the likeness of——?’ He paused trembling, as Agnes had paused trembling before him. Agnes! The name, of all women’s names the dearest to him, was a terror to him now! What was he to say to her? What might be the consequence if he trusted her with the terrible truth?

No footsteps approached the door; no voices were audible outside. The travellers were still occupied in the rooms at the eastern end of the corridor.

In the brief interval that had passed, the manager had sufficiently recovered himself to be able to think once more of the first and foremost interests of his life—the interests of the hotel. He approached Henry anxiously.

‘If this frightful discovery becomes known,’ he said, ‘the closing of the hotel and the ruin of the Company will be the inevitable results. I feel sure that I can trust your discretion, sir, so far?’

‘You can certainly trust me,’ Henry answered. ‘But surely discretion has its limits,’ he added, ‘after such a discovery as we have made?’

The manager understood that the duty which they owed to the community, as honest and law-abiding men, was the duty to which Henry now referred. ‘I will at once find the means,’ he said, ‘of conveying the remains privately out of the house, and I will myself place them in the care of the police-authorities. Will you leave the room with me? or do you not object to keep watch here, and help me when I return?’

While he was speaking, the voices of the travellers made themselves heard again at the end of the corridor. Henry instantly consented to wait in the room. He shrank from facing the inevitable meeting with Agnes if he showed himself in the corridor at that moment.

The manager hastened his departure, in the hope of escaping notice. He was discovered by his guests before he could reach the head of the stairs. Henry heard the voices plainly as he turned the key. While the terrible drama of discovery was in

progress on one side of the door, trivial questions about the amusements of Venice, and facetious discussions on the relative merits of French and Italian cookery, were proceeding on the other. Little by little, the sound of the talking grew fainter. The visitors, having arranged their plans of amusement for the day, were on their way out of the hotel. In a minute or two, there was silence once more.

Henry turned to the window, thinking to relieve his mind by looking at the bright view over the canal. He soon grew wearied of the familiar scene. The morbid fascination which seems to be exercised by all horrible sights, drew him back again to the ghastly object on the floor.

Dream or reality, how had Agnes survived the sight of it? As the question passed through his mind, he noticed for the first time something lying on the floor near the head. Looking closer, he perceived a thin little plate of gold, with three false teeth attached to it, which had apparently dropped out (loosened by the shock) when the manager let the head fall on the floor.

The importance of this discovery, and the necessity of not too readily communicating it to others, instantly struck Henry. Here surely was a chance—if any chance remained—of identifying the shocking relic of humanity which lay before him, the dumb witness of a crime! Acting on this idea, he took possession of the teeth, purposing to use them as a last means of inquiry when other attempts at investigation had been tried and had failed.

He went back again to the window: the solitude of the room began to weigh on his spirits. As he looked out again at the view, there was a soft knock at the door. He hastened to open it—and checked himself in the act. A doubt occurred to him. Was it the manager who had knocked? He called out, ‘Who is there?’

The voice of Agnes answered him. ‘Have you anything to tell me, Henry?’

He was hardly able to reply. ‘Not just now,’ he said, confusedly. ‘Forgive me if I don’t open the door. I will speak to you a little later.’

The sweet voice made itself heard again, pleading with him piteously. ‘Don’t leave me alone, Henry! I can’t go back to the happy people downstairs.’

How could he resist that appeal? He heard her sigh—he heard the rustling of her dress as she moved away in despair. The very thing that he had shrunk from doing but a few minutes since was the thing that he did now! He joined Agnes in the corridor. She turned as she heard him, and pointed, trembling, in the direc-

tion of the closed room. 'Is it so terrible as that?' she asked faintly.

He put his arm round her to support her. A thought came to him as he looked at her, waiting in doubt and fear for his reply. 'You shall know what I have discovered,' he said, 'if you will first put on your hat and cloak, and come out with me.'

She was naturally surprised. 'Can you tell me your object in going out?' she asked.

He owned what his object was unreservedly. 'I want, before all things,' he said, 'to satisfy your mind and mine, on the subject of Montbarry's death. I am going to take you to the doctor who attended him in his illness, and to the consul who followed him to the grave.'

Her eyes rested on Henry gratefully. 'Oh, how well you understand me!' she said. The manager joined them at the same moment, on his way up the stairs. Henry gave him the key of the room, and then called to the servants in the hall to have a gondola ready at the steps. 'Are you leaving the hotel?' the manager asked. 'In search of evidence,' Henry whispered, pointing to the key. 'If the authorities want me, I shall be back in an hour.'

CHAPTER XXV.

THE day had advanced to evening. Lord Montbarry and the bridal party had gone to the Opera. Agnes alone, pleading the excuse of fatigue, remained at the hotel. Having kept up appearances by accompanying his friends to the theatre, Henry Westwick slipped away after the first act, and joined Agnes in the drawing-room.

'Have you thought of what I said to you earlier in the day?' he asked, taking a chair at her side. 'Do you agree with me that the one dreadful doubt which oppressed us both is at least set at rest?'

Agnes shook her head sadly. 'I wish I could agree with you, Henry—I wish I could honestly say that my mind is at ease.'

The answer would have discouraged most men. Henry's patience (where Agnes was concerned) was equal to any demands on it.

'If you will only look back at the events of the day,' he said, 'you must surely admit that we have not been completely baffled. Remember how Dr. Bruno disposed of our doubts:—"After thirty years of medical practice, do you think I am likely to mistake the symptoms of death by bronchitis?" If ever there was an

unanswerable question, there it is! Was the consul's testimony doubtful in any part of it? He called at the palace to offer his services, after hearing of Lord Montbarry's death; he arrived at the time when the coffin was in the house; he himself saw the corpse placed in it, and the lid screwed down. The evidence of the priest was equally beyond dispute. He remained in the room with the coffin, reciting the prayers for the dead, until the funeral left the palace. Bear all these statements in mind, Agnes; and how can you deny that the question of Montbarry's death and burial is a question set at rest? We have really but one doubt left: we have still to ask ourselves whether the remains which I discovered are the remains of the lost courier, or not. There is the case, as I understand it. Have I stated it fairly?'

Agnes could not deny that he had stated it fairly.

'Then what prevents you from experiencing the same sense of relief that I feel?' Henry asked.

'What I saw last night prevents me,' Agnes answered. 'When we spoke of this subject, after our inquiries were over, you reproached me with taking what you called the superstitious view. I don't quite admit that—but I do acknowledge that I should find the superstitious view intelligible if I heard it expressed by some other person. Remembering what your brother and I once were to each other in the bygone time, I can understand the apparition making itself visible to Me, to claim the mercy of Christian burial, and the vengeance due to a crime. I can even perceive some faint possibility of truth in the explanation which you described as the mesmeric theory—that what I saw might be the result of magnetic influence communicated to me, as I lay between the remains of the murdered husband above me and the guilty wife suffering the tortures of remorse at my bedside. But what I do *not* understand is, that I should have passed through that dreadful ordeal; having no previous knowledge of the murdered man in his lifetime, or only knowing him (if you suppose that I saw the apparition of Ferrari) through the interest which I took in his wife. I can't dispute your reasoning, Henry. But I feel in my heart of hearts that you are deceived. Nothing will shake my belief that we are still as far from having discovered the dreadful truth as ever.'

Henry made no further attempt to dispute with her. She had impressed him with a certain reluctant respect for her own opinion, in spite of himself.

'Have you thought of any better way of arriving at the truth?' he asked. 'Who is to help us? No doubt there is the Countess, who has the clue to the mystery in her own hands. But,

in the present state of her mind, is her testimony to be trusted—even if she were willing to speak? Judging by my own experience, I should say decidedly not.’

‘You don’t mean that you have seen her again?’ Agnes eagerly interposed.

‘Yes. I had half an hour to spare before dinner; and I disturbed her once more over her endless writing.’

‘And you told her what you found when you opened the hiding-place?’

‘Of course I did!’ Henry replied. ‘I said, in so many words, that I held her responsible for the discovery, and that I expected her to reveal the whole truth. She went on with her writing as if I had spoken in an unknown tongue! I was equally obstinate, on my side. I told her plainly that the head had been placed under the care of the police, and that the manager and I had signed our declarations and given our evidence. She paid not the slightest heed to me. By way of tempting her to speak, I added that the whole investigation was to be kept a secret, and that she might depend on my discretion. For the moment I thought I had succeeded. She looked up from her writing with a passing flash of curiosity, and said, “What are they going to do with it?”—meaning, I suppose, the head. I answered that it was to be privately buried, after photographs of it had first been taken. I even went the length of communicating the opinion of the surgeon consulted, that some chemical means of arresting decomposition had been used, and had only partially succeeded—and I asked her point-blank if the surgeon was right? The trap was not a bad one—but it completely failed. She said in the coolest manner, “Now you are here, I should like to consult you about my play; I am at a loss for some new incidents.” Mind! there was nothing satirical in this. She was really eager to read her wonderful work to me—evidently supposing that I took a special interest in such things, because my brother is the manager of a theatre! I left her, making the first excuse that occurred to me. So far as I am concerned, I can do nothing with her. But it is possible that *your* influence may succeed with her again, as it has succeeded already. Will you make the attempt, to satisfy your own mind? She is still upstairs; and I am quite ready to accompany you.’

Agnes shuddered at the bare suggestion of another interview with the Countess.

‘I can’t! I daren’t!’ she exclaimed. ‘After what has happened in that horrible room, she is more repellent to me than ever. Don’t ask me to do it, Henry! Feel my hand—you have turned me as cold as death only with talking of it!’

She was not exaggerating the terror that possessed her. Henry hastened to change the subject.

‘Let us talk of something more interesting,’ he said. ‘I have a question to ask you about yourself. Am I right in believing that the sooner you get away from Venice the happier you will be?’

‘Right?’ she repeated excitedly. ‘You are more than right! No words can say how I long to be away from this horrible place. But you know how I am situated—you heard what Lord Montbarry said at dinner-time?’

‘Suppose he has altered his plans, since dinner-time?’ Henry suggested.

Agnes looked surprised. ‘I thought he had received letters from England which obliged him to leave Venice to-morrow,’ she said.

‘Quite true,’ Henry admitted. ‘He had arranged to start for England to-morrow, and to leave you and Lady Montbarry and the children to enjoy your holiday in Venice, under my care. Circumstances have occurred, however, which have forced him to alter his plans. He must take you all back with him to-morrow, because I am not able to assume the charge of you. I am obliged to give up my holiday in Italy, and return to England too.’

Agnes looked at him in some little perplexity: she was not quite sure whether she understood him or not. ‘Are you really obliged to go back?’ she asked.

Henry smiled as he answered her. ‘Keep the secret,’ he said, ‘or Montbarry will never forgive me!’

She read the rest in his face. ‘Oh!’ she exclaimed, blushing brightly, ‘you have not given up your pleasant holiday in Italy on my account?’

‘I shall go back with you to England, Agnes. That will be holiday enough for *me*.’

She took his hand in an irrepressible outburst of gratitude. ‘How good you are to me!’ she murmured tenderly. ‘What should I have done in the troubles that have come to me, without your sympathy? I can’t tell you, Henry, how I feel your kindness.’

She tried impulsively to lift his hand to her lips. He gently stopped her. ‘Agnes,’ he said, ‘are you beginning to understand how truly I love you?’

That simple question found its own way to her heart. She owned the whole truth, without saying a word. She looked at him—and then looked away again.

He drew her to his bosom. ‘My own darling!’ he whispered—and kissed her. Softly and tremulously, the sweet lips lingered, and touched his lips in return. Then her head drooped. She put

her arms round his neck, and hid her face in his bosom. They spoke no more.

The charmed silence had lasted but a little while, when it was mercilessly broken by a knock at the door.

Agnes started to her feet. She placed herself at the piano; the instrument being opposite to the door, it was impossible, when she seated herself on the music-stool, for any person entering the room to see her face. Henry called out irritably, 'Come in.'

The door was not opened. The person on the other side of it asked a strange question.

'Is Mr. Henry Westwick alone?'

Agnes instantly recognised the voice of the Countess. She hurried to a second door, which communicated with one of the bed-rooms. 'Don't let her come near me!' she whispered nervously. 'Good night, Henry! good night!'

If Henry could, by an effort of will, have transported the Countess to the uttermost ends of the earth, he would have made the effort without remorse. As it was, he only repeated, more irritably than ever, 'Come in!'

She entered the room slowly with her everlasting manuscript in her hand. Her step was unsteady; a dark flush appeared on her face, in place of its customary pallor; her eyes were bloodshot and widely dilated. In approaching Henry, she showed a strange incapability of calculating her distances—she struck against the table near which he happened to be sitting. When she spoke, her articulation was confused, and her pronunciation of some of the longer words was hardly intelligible. Most men would have suspected her of being under the influence of some intoxicating liquor. Henry took a truer view—he said, as he placed a chair for her, 'Countess, I am afraid you have been working too hard: you look as if you wanted rest.'

She put her hand to her head. 'My invention has gone,' she said. 'I can't write my fourth act. It's all a blank—all a blank!'

Henry advised her to wait till the next day. 'Go to bed,' he suggested; 'and try to sleep.'

She waved her hand impatiently. 'I must finish the play,' she answered. 'I only want a hint from you. You must know something about plays. Your brother has got a theatre. You must often have heard him talk about fourth and fifth acts—you must have seen rehearsals, and all the rest of it.' She abruptly thrust the manuscript into Henry's hand. 'I can't read it to you,' she said; 'I feel giddy when I look at my own writing. Just run your eye over it, there's a good fellow—and give me a hint.'

Henry glanced at the manuscript. He happened to look at the list of the persons of the drama. As he read the list he started and turned abruptly to the Countess, intending to ask her for some explanation. The words were suspended on his lips. It was but too plainly useless to speak to her. Her head lay back on the rail of the chair. She seemed to be half asleep already. The flush on her face had deepened: she looked like a woman who was in danger of having a fit.

He rang the bell, and directed the man who answered it to send one of the chambermaids upstairs. His voice seemed to partially rouse the Countess; she opened her eyes in a slow drowsy way. 'Have you read it?' she asked.

It was necessary as a mere act of humanity to humour her. 'I will read it willingly,' said Henry, 'if you will go upstairs to bed. You shall hear what I think of it to-morrow morning. Our heads will be clearer, we shall be better able to make the fourth act in the morning.'

The chambermaid came in while he was speaking. 'I am afraid the lady is ill,' Henry whispered. 'Take her up to her room.' The woman looked at the Countess and whispered back, 'Shall we send for a doctor, sir?'

Henry advised taking her upstairs first, and then asking the manager's advice. There was great difficulty in persuading her to rise, and accept the support of the chambermaid's arm. It was only by reiterated promises to read the play that night, and to make the fourth act in the morning, that Henry prevailed on the Countess to return to her room.

Left to himself, he began to feel a certain languid curiosity in relation to the manuscript. He looked over the pages, reading a line here and a line there. Suddenly he changed colour as he read—and looked up from the manuscript like a man bewildered. 'Good God! what does this mean?' he said to himself.

His eyes turned nervously to the door by which Agnes had left him. She might return to the drawing-room; she might want to see what the Countess had written. He looked back again at the passage which had startled him—considered with himself for a moment—and suddenly and softly left the room.

(To be continued.)

Among the Thousand Islands.

My wife and I are camping out for a fortnight among the Thousand Islands. Our friend the Colonel has offered us the hospitality of his steam yacht and his hut; so here we are, on a charming little domain of four hundred yards square, living the primitive life of squaws and braves—fishing, shooting, boating, swimming, and flirting unconscionably—in total oblivion of Pall Mall or Piccadilly, and ready to fling politics and propriety, like physic, to the dogs. And this is how we have got here.

Our friend the Colonel is a *compagnon de voyage*, whom we picked up in the Clifton House at Niagara. He does not seem to be a military man, but apparently holds his title as a sort of brevet rank. He lives at Detroit, so he tells us; and from hints which various other members of our little party let drop from time to time, I strongly suspect that the Colonel's true vocation lies rather in the dry-goods line. However, our host has plenty of money, a pretty little steam yacht, and an island of his own among the famous thousand; so the only wonder is that he has not long since been elevated into a General or a Judge. Handles to one's name go cheap in Republican America, and every man with five hundred a year or upwards receives honorary promotion as Captain or Commodore at least.

The Colonel is hospitality itself. We wandered about Niagara for a week with him and Mrs. Colonel (such a style of address is *de rigueur* in Trans-Atlantic society); and at the end of that short acquaintance, the good soul positively insisted that we should accompany his party to the Thousand Islands, and become members of a camping-out expedition. For all he knows, we may be bank-swindlers or pickpockets; nay, worse, he may be introducing into the bosom of his family a pair of English runaways, anxious to avail themselves of the easy deliverance afforded by the divorce-courts of Illinois; yet he accepts us unhesitatingly, on our own authority, as mere travelling Britishers on a scientific mission, desirous of seeing as much of America as we conveniently can in a three months' trip. Upon my word, good kindly western brethren, when I bethink me of your warm hearts and your childlike confidence, I feel ashamed of myself for sometimes hinting that your voices sound a trifle nasal, and that your manners smack a trifle of the aboriginal backwoodsman.

But what and where are the Thousand Islands? asks my country

reader. Now, dear reader, don't be angry because I have found you out. Confess that you have only the very haziest notion of where this delightful region may be, and I will confess to you in turn that I hadn't the slightest idea myself until I came here. Which of us knows anything about geography, except by travelling? We have a clear conception as to the whereabouts of Paris, and Brussels, and Cologne, and Milan, and Naples, because we have all been there; but can you answer me whether Delhi is on the Ganges or the Jamna, and whether it lies to the north or to the south of Agra? In what state of the Union is Chicago, and on which of the great lakes does it stand? You know you can't tell me; and I couldn't have told you three or four years ago. In topographical matters, seeing is believing; for eyes, as good old Herodotus puts it, happen to be better witnesses among men than ears. So allow me first to tell you what and where these Thousand Islands are, and then I shall try to picture for you our life in their midst.

Just at the point where Lake Ontario empties its waters into the great river St. Lawrence, a barrier of granite rock bars its course. Through the grooves and depressions in this rock the river winds its way by a hundred different channels; while all the higher masses rise above the surface of the water as tiny islets, crowned with brushwood and Canadian pines. Ages ago, during the great glacial period, the ice wore down the summits of these rocky bosses into smooth rounded domes; and now they appear upon the river's edge like basking whales or huge elephants' backs. You may trace the markings of the glacier on the scratched and worn granite, just as you may trace it on the *roches moutonnées* of Swiss valleys, or on the grand slopes of our own Llanberis and Aberglaslyn. Sometimes the water has washed away the side into a mimic cliff; but more often the rounded boss rises in a gentle curve above the blue waves, showing its red seamed structure near the edge, and covered towards its summit by mould, on which grow low bushes or tall and stately trees.

Some of the islands are big enough to afford farms for the industrious squatter, who has made himself a title by the simple act of settling down bodily on his appropriated realm. Others, however, are mere points of granite, on which a single pine maintains a struggling existence against wave in summer and ice-floe in winter; while not a few consist only of a bare rocky hog's back, just raised an inch or two above the general level of the water. But the most wonderful point of all is their number. Most people imagine that the term 'Thousand Islands' is a pardonable poetical exaggeration, covering a prosaic and statistical

reality of some fifty or a hundred actual islets. But no, not at all—the popular name really understates the true features of the case. A regular survey reveals the astonishing fact that no fewer than *three thousand* of these lovely little fairy lands stud the blue expanse to which they give their name—the Lake of the Thousand Islands. All day long you may wander in and out among their intricate mazes, gliding round tiny capes, exploring narrow channels, losing your way hopelessly in watery *cule-de-sac*, and drinking in beauty to your soul's content. Fairy lands, I called them just now, and fairy lands they veritably seem. Their charm is all their own. I have seen much variety of scenery on this planet of ours, north, south, east, and west; but I never saw anything so unique, so individual, so perfectly *sui generis* as these Thousand Islands. Not that they are so surpassingly beautiful; but their beauty is so unlike anything that one may see anywhere else. Tiny little islands, placed in tiny little rivers, crowned with tiny little *châteaux*, and navigated by tiny little yachts; it all reminds one so thoroughly of one's childish dreamlands, that I declare I should hardly be surprised to see Queen Mab or Queen Titania step down, wand in hand, to the water's side, and a group of attendant fairies dance around her in a grassy circle.

Among such scenery it is that we glide these delicious summer mornings, disporting ourselves in the Colonel's yacht, and drawing in fresh life with every breath. All the world here seems to own a steam yacht; indeed, the possession of that costly piece of property appears as necessary a mark of respectability among the islands as a chimney-pot or a card in Mayfair. Up and down they go perpetually, snorting defiance from their shrill whistles, with a note whose excessive treble seems to surpass all the resources of acoustics; saluting without end the endless bunting which waves the stars and stripes from every tent, hut, or cottage, with that effusive loyalty peculiar to the great American people; and getting into interminable trouble upon shoals or reefs, fouling, grounding, colliding, but by the mercy of some special providence never capsizing.

The Colonel brought us here from Kingston in his own specimen of these quaint little craft, some ten days ago. Kingston stands to the islands in the same relation as Chamouni stands to Mont Blanc, or Oban to the Western Highlands. It forms the starting-point, the centre, and the rendezvous. To Kingston we came from Niagara and Toronto by steamboat, across the wide waste of Lake Ontario, a shoreless sea, whose low banks form one endless expanse of growing, waving corn. Corn in vast sheets for fifteen miles inland, as the country slopes away upward from the lake-side;

corn in the foreground of our voyage, rising up for ever before us as we moved on; corn sinking below the horizon as we looked back over the distance already covered, and shaking its myriad heads in the breeze to the utmost limit that the eye could see. No hedges, no copses, no parks, no trees, nothing but corn, corn, corn, till one begins to disbelieve in the possibility of famine, and to wonder where all the millers and bakers will ever come from. The good Canadian farmer—that mild modern Vandal with a tinge of Methodism—has cut down the pine-woods right and left before his utilitarian axe, leaving only a Philistine paradise of agricultural wealth and prosperity, where every man eats roast beef and plum-pudding under his own vine and fig-tree, while nobody troubles his head about useless trifles like the picturesque and the beautiful. If it be true, as they say, that good Americans, when they die, go to Paris, then I am sure that by parity of reasoning the soul of William Cobbett must be comfortably housed on the desecrated shores of Lake Ontario.

It was delightful after ten or fifteen hours of this monotonous scenery to find ourselves at last in the pretty little open harbour of Kingston. A wooded country stretched around us on every side, while the outliers of the Thousand Islands lay within sight to the south and east. In front, a basking blue stone-built town glowed in the foreground, its roofs all covered with tinned iron, and shining like gold in the morning sun. I could almost fancy myself in the East once more, looking out upon some domed and minaretted village of the Bosphorus. Building after building of a quaint debased American-Byzantine style, propped on pseudo-Doric pillars and surmounted by a false Italian dome (wood, tin-plated), stared out upon us boldly, unabashed by its own pretentious absurdity. Incredibly monstrous they all are, if taken separately—perfect models of the avoidable in architectonic art, which Mr. Ruskin would rejoice to pillory, and Mr. Fergusson would delight in demolishing—yet looked on in the mass from the waterside, they really compose a pretty and harmonious picture. The effect is much heightened, too, by a few scattered martello towers, standing straight out of the shallow water, with red-rusted iron roofs, which contrast finely with the sun-gilded domes; while a grim European-looking fort crowns a slight eminence eastward, and spreads its brown-burnt glacis down to the water's edge. Altogether, rather a pleasant oasis in the desert of white-and-green American towns; for this quiet old Kingston is no bantling of yesterday, like Buffalo or Toronto, but the lineal descendant of Louis Quatorze's Fort Frontenac, quite an historical city for the New World.

Onward from Kingston the Colonel escorted us in person on

board his aforesaid yacht, the *General Jackson*, to Mathison Island, his own peculiar domain, some ten miles off, in the very heart of that beautiful miniature archipelago. We reached our destination at six o'clock on a lovely evening. The whole party, some seven gentlemen with as many ladies, were ranged ready to receive us on the landing-place, a rapidly shelving granite step, where the water stood ten feet deep close under the shore. Above the rock, a tall white pole bore aloft the inevitable bunting, provocative of a fresh loyal display from every wandering steam-whistle that passes throughout the day. 'Salute the flag!' says the Colonel, with a military air; and the stoker turns on a hideous blast which stuns our ears like ten thousand claps of thunder. Then the little craft sidles gently against the solid natural pier, and we step lightly out at last on the shore of the Thousand Islands.

The ceremony of introduction follows, and oh! what a ceremony. I almost fear to tell the tale, lest I should be accused of exaggeration. The Colonel takes me by the hand gravely and trots me out in front of the assembled party. 'Mr. Doolittle,' he says to the eldest of the group in a sepulchral tone; 'allow me to present you to Mr. Wilson, a British gentleman now on a scientific visit to America.'

I bow distantly to Mr. Doolittle, after our European fashion; but such is evidently not the custom of the country. Mr. Doolittle advances three paces mechanically, as one would advance in a quadrille, grasps my hand firmly, and holds it while he says in the same sepulchral voice, 'Mr. Wilson. Sir. I am proud to make your acquaintance. Welcome to the Thousand Islands.' Having said which words as a child repeats its lessons, he drops my hand mechanically, and retreats three paces, quadrille fashion once more, into the general line.

Then the Colonel begins again. Taking the second in age among the gentlemen he observes, tone and manner as before: 'Dr. Koerber, allow me to present you to Mr. Wilson, a British gentleman now on a scientific visit to America.'

Dr. Koerber takes his turn, steps forward his three paces, grasps my hand exactly as Mr. Doolittle had done, and then observes, in precisely the same regulation tone, 'Mr. Wilson. Sir. I am proud to make your acquaintance. Welcome to the Thousand Islands.' The hand drops: three paces to the rear again: and Major Greely Robbins comes to take *his* turn.

Through all the seven gentlemen the same pantomime takes place with admirable gravity, and then through all the seven ladies. Meanwhile, Mrs. Colonel has taken my wife in hand, and, beginning with the ladies, presents the whole fourteen persons to

her with exactly the self-same speeches on either side. Having done which, the party suddenly unbends, becomes natural, and begins to talk like rational creatures, not-like highly-trained poll-parrots. For my own part, I felt myself blushing fiery red, for a terrible fear possessed me that my wife would misunderstand this ceremonial, and laugh outright with her hearty, silvery, English laugh. But I learnt afterwards, when a moment of intercommunication turned up, that she had been in equal fear lest *my* gravity should prove unequal to the occasion: so happily no harm came of it in either case.

‘You see, Colonel,’ said Mr. Doolittle, leading the way to the huts, ‘we have succeeded in erecting the flag of our country since your departure.’

‘I observe you have, Sheriff,’ answered the Colonel, (of course it was imperative that Mr. Doolittle should possess a title of some sort, and this was apparently the special form which the respect of his fellow-citizens had assumed :) ‘I observe, and I trust our British friends will enjoy the full freedom and security which that flag never fails to afford.’ Uttering which sentiment like a copy-book maxim, the Colonel took us on to inspect the preparations made for our reception. I really often wonder whether these people possess independent minds like our own, or whether after all they form a sort of hereditary unconscious automaton.

Assuredly, camping out is a much more luxurious proceeding than the ordinary Britisher could easily conceive. They know how to make themselves comfortable, do these children of the Great Republic, and their cousins in the Dominion over the way. The ‘huts’ in which we were to house ourselves turn out on closer investigation to be two large and airy rough wooden buildings, looking very much like overgrown barns, but pleasant enough in their internal arrangements. No glass adorns the empty windows, which are really the etymological wind-doors of our early English ancestors: but the light and the breeze come through them readily enough, and at night we close them up securely with rough pine-wood shutters against possible bad weather. One of the huts accommodates the male members of the party, who have permanent beds fitted up on the grassy floor; actual feather beds, erect upon four iron legs, with a flexible chain *sommier* to support them. The second hut, which does duty as dining-room during the day, acts as general ladies’ bedroom at night. The Colonel poetically refers to it as the Bower, but the other men of the party profanely christen it the Hennerly.

Supper stands on the table at the moment of our arrival, and we are seated in our places before we quite know where we are.

The table consists of several long planks, set carelessly on some trestles ; but a snowy white cloth covers it from end to end ; and pretty common earthenware graces it with a homely grace. *Simplex munditiis* is the motto of the Hennery, and the supper of a surety deserves that high commendation. There is capital tea from a steaming kettle (the fire still smoulders outside), with cream—real cream, for we keep a cow on the island ; there is bread, and there are hot cakes, and fresh white-fish, and ham, and cold beef, and boiled eggs. Above all, there is appetite, healthy robust appetite, the result of abundant air and proper exercise. We eat our supper with a will, amid much laughing (a wee bit nasal), much chatting, and no small proportion of wild flirtation. But we are no ascetics, not a man or woman of the company, and we all enjoy a supper, a laugh, and a good flirt, as well as heart can reasonably desire.

But, to avoid vain repetition, I had better tell you at once how we spend a sample day. In the morning, we men are all astir at seven or before, the ladies never rising till half-past seven. We go down to a sequestered spot on one side of the island, shaded by Canadian cedar, and hemmed in by tiny granite cliffs ; and here we take our morning dip. The water is deep enough to allow of a delicious header, and so clear that you may see the fish scuttling out of your way in alarm as you dive among their astonished shoals. By half-past seven we have all returned to the Club, as we call the men's hut, and have endued ourselves in garments fit for the eyes of womankind. Then, and not till then, the ladies may show themselves, which they promptly proceed to do, and the work of the day begins at once. Into the mystery of the ladies' ablutions I cannot proceed—indeed, I have no authenticated accounts upon which to base a veracious history. The Doctor asserts that the ladies have a bathing place of their own at the opposite end of the island, sheltered from possible intruders by a canvas screen ; while two chains, set across the narrow channel, prevent the access of 'foreign' boats. But how this may be I cannot answer from personal experience : I only know that a rope has been fastened from tree to tree at the ladies' end, which a law, like that in Tennyson's 'Princess,' forbids any man to pass on pain of death : and of course no one of the party has ever at any time laid himself open to capital punishment on this account. In England, the curiosity of the younger members might lead them to transgress during the small hours of the night, just to settle the problem ; but the self-restraining American, always courtesy embodied where women are in question, would never dream of overstepping the appointed limit.

The day's labour begins with lighting the fire and boiling the

kettle on a rough hearth of heaped-up stones. That task completed by the men, the housewife community makes the tea and lays the table. Fresh provisions arrive every second day from Alexandra Bay, by yacht, and, more marvellous still, the mail, including the New York papers. When breakfast has been set, we all fall to, and make short work of the various good things provided for us. Then sentence of banishment is proclaimed against the men, while the Club is cleared out and the beds made. After that performance, the excursions of the day are organised, and we separate till two o'clock dinner. Sometimes we boat among the surrounding islands, and lose our way among the little channels, only to recover it by some red-painted number, which indicates a special land-mark. At other times we improve the commissariat by a catch of rock-bass or speckled trout. Some of us sketch or paint in water-colours; others botanize or gather snail-shells: the Doctor has a mania for butterflies; while the Major consumes most of his time by lying on his back in the shade, and smoking innumerable cheroots. So, in various ways, we wile away the hours, every man in his humour, till two o'clock brings the dinner.

From dinner to supper passes in much the same manner as from breakfast to dinner, with this difference, that peradventure we work a little less and flirt a great deal more. Practical divorce has been imposed on us by the laws of the community, coupled with a kind of Platonic communism. You stroll off after dinner with some one of the seven pretty girls or women, to any sequestered nook on the island or one of its neighbours, and there you go through a farce of fishing or sketching, which really serves as a transparent pretence for a downright American flirtation. You lie on your back and discuss everything, nothing, everybody, nobody, philosophy, society, and love. Unhappily, the islands are so very small that you invariably find your own wife, with *her* companion, intervening at the exact moment when you have asked a most telling question, and are gazing with a capital imitation of boyish and poetical ardour into a pair of swimming blue eyes in front of you. But such little *contretemps* are really the very making of the flirtation. Without them, it might become 'quite too awfully real:' but as we have all got thoroughly accustomed to surprising one another in the midst of tragi-comical pseud-erotic passages, we have learnt to regard the whole transaction as a vast and harmless joke, in which nobody means anything, and nobody expects to escape being laughed at.

Of course, in dear prudish tittle-tattling old England, such freedom would be impossible. Ineffable scandals would arise, and become themes for Mrs. Grundy's tea-table throughout the next

half-century. But then England, with all her virtues—and I am one of her most devotedly affectionate sons—cannot be acquitted of a tendency towards scandal-mongering, like a majestic old Aunt Tabitha as she is. America, on the other hand, is rich in that charity which thinketh no evil. *Honi soit* might be just as truly her motto as that of her suspicious mother-country; and, to say the truth, I think she applies it a great deal better. The self-respect of men and women, and the universal chivalrous courtesy shown to the weaker sex, prevent the necessity for all those conventional barriers with which we in England fortify ourselves against Paul Pry and Mrs. Candour. Young ladies receive their own visitors in their private drawing-room, and mamma never dreams of intervening to do propriety. Engaged couples start alone to spend a week at some hotel among the Hudson Highlands or the Adirondacks, and no New York society is convulsed by their shocking conduct. The result is that American women, perfectly independent and free in their outward movements, are hedged round by a cordon of self-constraint and self-possession which the boldest Lothario would never venture to transgress. If you want to know what were the emotions of a Greek who felt himself turning into stone under the petrifying gaze of the Gorgon Medusa, you have only to watch the freezing glance of an American maiden who faintly suspects you of a contemplated incursion beyond that magic and circumscribed circle.

Thus, between love-making real and pretended—for of course some of our young couples have an eye to serious business, and a camping-out excursion offers splendid opportunities for rigging the matrimonial market with little fear of competition—our day passes away pleasantly enough, and six o'clock brings supper. Tea, we should call it at home—the good old-fashioned high tea which still lingers in remote counties: but the American mind follows the traditions of its Puritan ancestors, and speaks of it by the still older English name of supper. It is interesting to note how the habits of a simple colonial farmer community still cling about this great, wealthy, thoroughly-sophisticated, ultra-civilised mercantile people. They dine early almost to a man: and the terrible institution of an early dinner, which might really be substituted for the treadmill in modern prisons, derives some mitigation among the Islands from the abundance of fresh air which we imbibe between whiles. They sup at six, with a portentous prodigality unknown to older lands. They seldom wear a swallow-tail coat, the decent black frock being considered sufficient for almost any solemnity. And they carry about five hundred minor farmer tinges through all their doings, which survive to mark the creature from which they

have developed, just as Mr. Darwin and Professor Huxley tell us that the tips of our ears and the rudimentary caudal appendages of our vertebral column still survive in man to mark our descent from 'an arboreal quadrumanous mammal'—Anglicè, an ape.

After supper comes the delicious coolness of Canadian eventide—Canadian, I say, for though our island lies on the republican side of the imaginary boundary, the archipelago as a whole belongs in its geography and its climate to Upper Canada. We sit in front of the huts, on chairs or sward, and the Doctor strums his violin, while a young man from Skaniateles (orthography guaranteed) accompanies on the flute, and one or other of the nymphs in muslin sings some appropriate verses. The music lingers over the waters, and rings back again from the granite bosses in a dozen dying echoes, each one farther off and fainter than the last. Then the daylight fades, the fire-flies begin to glimmer among the cedar trees, the calm water mirrors back their flashes, the violin and flute subside, a single English voice pours out a lower, richer, fuller flood of music, and the heart of man waxes dreamily poetical till all is silent. The shrill whistle of a passing yacht happily intervenes to save us from the approaching wave of sentimentality; and about ten o'clock sees us all turned off to our bachelor quarters, where we lie eight or nine in a room as big as a ball-room, and are soon snoring at our ease, to begin again the same aimless, listless, delicious, do-nothing life to-morrow morning.

A few more words about the other islands, and then I must quit the little group, perhaps for ever. Now and then we start in the yacht to explore the surrounding channels, and to discover 'kings and islands new,' like the great rear-admiral Bailey Pip in Mr. Gilbert's masterpiece. For kings abound here as well as kingdoms. Numbers of wealthy New York merchants or Chicago shippers have bought an island, and built upon it a pretty little cottage, sometimes rising to the pretensions of a mansion. Mr. Pullman, the lucky inventor of drawing-room cars, has raised himself a perfect palace in the outward semblance of a *château*, grown out of all recognition, but still retaining the deep eaves and fancy wood-work of its toy-shop original. Many another celebrity has displayed his taste (or his want thereof) in ornate buildings, perched upon little rocky knolls, and always surmounted by that ubiquitous square of bunting, which proclaims the aggressive nationality of its loyal possessor. On the whole, most of these cottages are in perfect harmony with their surroundings, and add to the picture rather than detract from it. Indeed, the Americans, who generally fail with an absolute magnificence of failure in the higher walks of architecture, have considerable taste in domestic buildings,

while in landscape gardening and the laying out of parks or ornamental grounds it must be at once conceded that they 'whip creation.'

Every one of these island realms has its own landing-place, often a regular pier, where the yacht lies moored during the greater part of the day. The little craft bring down their masters at the beginning of the season, and carry them about during the summer months in search of the picturesque. The cottages are furnished in true American style, with satin, mirrors, and gilding; and they contain a company during the season not unlike that of an English country-house, accent and manners always excepted.

Other islands, like the Colonel's, belong to mere campers-out, who prefer to rough it in simpler style. Even these, however, as will have been seen already, are far from devoid of the luxuries of life; and I must say, my first feeling was one of disappointment, when I found *pâté de foie gras* and champagne included in the bill of fare. Civilisation pursues us nowadays, as Horace used to tell us black care pursued the wealthy, till at last we are reading English scientific weeklies, twelve days after publication, in a summer camp among the Thousand Islands.

Here and there, however, we come upon some more genuine campers, in the shape of a young men's party, who have appropriated an unoccupied island for the nonce, and are really living under canvas. These hearty young fellows turn out as a rule to be Canadian students or military cadets, for the true Yankee loves civilisation too well to forego roof or bed, except upon dire necessity thereto prevailing. Your genuine camper also lives largely on the spoils of his gun and his rod, often taking with him no more than a bag of Indian meal, which he kneads into damper with water from the river, and bakes rudely upon a flat stone. But, alas, *luxuria armis savior incubuit*; and I fear me that the honest Canadian stripling himself has begun to indulge in tinned provisions, while I can assert from personal experience that brandy-and-soda is no unknown beverage, even under primitive canvas. When the first Japanese ambassadors came to Europe in quest of civilisation, they were duly regaled at the Mansion House with a civic banquet. As the interpreter's glass was filled again and again with bubbling Veuve Clicquot, that excellent functionary exclaimed many times with much fervour, 'How I *do* like civilisation!' Japan is not the only country, apparently, which is ready to accept the precious boon in the same limited sense.

One other island positively claims attention from its local colouring, its perfect raciness of American feeling. A good many hotels line the shores of the little archipelago, but for many years

no island had been specially set apart for religious services. At length, an enterprising body set on foot the notion of a permanent camp-meeting. No sooner said than done. Wells Island was opened for the purpose ; a meeting-house was built, a landing-place was provided, and appropriate services were devised. The enterprise proved an enormous success. Numbers of good souls who regarded picnics as worldly, and camping out as little short of sinful, accepted the invitation to visit the Islands for prayer-meetings and missionary sermons. You hire a 'location' on Wells Island for the season just as you rent a pew in church. Steamers call at the landing-stage on their voyages up or down ; the good people disembark, while the less good go on to livelier shores : and nowadays Wells Island does a roaring trade, from spring to autumn, in spiritual consolations and material provisions, not including alcoholic stimulants. The whole notion is deliciously redolent of American character, with its quaint and shrewd mixture of godliness and money-making.

As a parting word, let me say to all readers, if you are tired of that eternal round—Cologne, the Rhine, Switzerland, the Italian lakes, Rome, Paris, and London—why not run across the Atlantic ? And if you run across, and can spare a week or so in the sultry summer weather, be sure you don't forget to try the Thousand Islands. You must be a very difficult fellow to please if you don't thank me heartily for the hint on your return.

J. ARBUTHNOT WILSON.

'A Tourist from Injianny.'

BY BRET HARTE.

WE first saw him from the deck of the 'Unser Fritz,' as that gallant steamer was preparing to leave the port of New York for Plymouth, Havre, and Hamburg. Perhaps it was that all objects at that moment became indelibly impressed on the memory of the departing voyager—perhaps it was that mere interrupting trivialities always assume undue magnitude to us when we are waiting for something really important—but I retain a vivid impression of him as he appeared on the gangway in apparently hopeless, yet, as it afterward appeared, really triumphant, altercation with the German-speaking deck-hands and stewards. He was not an heroic figure. Clad in a worn linen duster, his arms filled with bags and parcels, he might have been taken for a hackman carrying the luggage of his fare. But it was noticeable that, although he calmly persisted in speaking English and ignoring the voluble German of his antagonists, he in some rude fashion accomplished his object, without losing his temper or increasing his temperature, while his foreign enemy was crimson with rage and perspiring with heat; and that presently, having violated a dozen of the ship's regulations, he took his place by the side of a very pretty girl, apparently his superior in station, who addressed him as 'father.' As the great ship swung out into the stream he was still a central figure on our deck, getting into everybody's way, addressing all with equal familiarity, imperturbable to affront or snub, but always doggedly and consistently adhering to one purpose, however trivial or inadequate to the means employed. 'You're sittin' on suthin' o' mine, miss,' he began for the third or fourth time to the elegant Miss Montmorris, who was re-visiting Europe under high social conditions. 'Jist rise up while I get it—'twon't take a minit.' Not only was that lady forced to rise, but to make necessary the rising and discomposing of the whole Montmorris party who were congregated around her. The missing 'suthin'' was discovered to be a very old and battered newspaper. 'It's the Cincinnatty Times,' he explained, as he quietly took it up, oblivious to the indignant glances of the party. 'It's a little squoshed by your sittin' on it, but it'll do to re-fer to. It's got a letter from Payris, showin' the prices o' them thar hotels and rist'rants, and I allowed to my darter we might want it on the

other side. 'Thar's one or two French names thar that rather gets me—mebbe your eyes is stronger;' but here the entire Montmorris party rustled away, leaving him with the paper in one hand—the other pointing at the paragraph. Not at all discomfited, he glanced at the vacant bench, took possession of it with his hat, duster, and umbrella, disappeared, and presently appeared again with his daughter, a lank-looking young man, and an angular elderly female, and—so replaced the Montmorrises.

When we were fairly at sea he was missed. A pleasing belief that he had fallen overboard, or had been left behind, was dissipated by his appearance one morning, with his daughter on one arm, and the elderly female before alluded to on the other. The 'Unser Fritz' was rolling heavily at the time, but with his usual awkward pertinacity he insisted upon attempting to walk toward the best part of the deck, as he always did, as if it were a right and a duty. A lurch brought him and his uncertain freight in contact with the Montmorrises, there was a moment of wild confusion, two or three seats were emptied, and he was finally led away by the steward, an obviously and obtrusively sick man. But when he had disappeared below it was noticed that he had secured two excellent seats for his female companions. Nobody dared to disturb the elder, nobody cared to disturb the younger—who it may be here recorded had a certain shy reserve which checked aught but the simplest civilities from the male passengers.

A few days later it was discovered that he was not an inmate of the first, but of the second cabin; that the elderly female was not his wife as popularly supposed, but the room-mate of his daughter in the first cabin. These facts made his various intrusions on the saloon deck the more exasperating to the Montmorrises, yet the more difficult to deal with. Eventually, however, he had, as usual, his own way; no place was sacred, or debarred his slouched hat and duster. They were turned out of the engine room to reappear upon the bridge, they were forbidden the forecastle to rise a ghostly presence beside the officer in his solemn supervision of the compass. They would have been lashed to the rigging on their way to the maintop, but for the silent protest of his daughter's presence on the deck. Most of his interrupting familiar conversation was addressed to the interdicted 'man at the wheel.'

Hitherto I had contented myself with the fascination of his presence from afar—wisely perhaps deeming it dangerous to a true picturesque perspective to alter my distance, and perhaps, like the best of us, I fear, preferring to keep my own idea of him than to run the risk of altering it by a closer acquaintance. But one day when I was lounging by the stern rail, idly watching the dogged

ostentation of the screw, that had been steadily intimating, after the fashion of screws, that it was the only thing in the ship with a persistent purpose, the ominous shadow of the slouched hat and the trailing duster fell upon me. There was nothing to do but accept it meekly. Indeed, my theory of the man made me helpless.

'I didn't know till yesterday who you be,' he began deliberately, 'or I shouldn't hev' been so unsocial. But I've allers told my darter that in permiskiss trav'lin' a man oughter be keerful of who he meets. I've read some of your writins—read 'em in a paper in Injianny, but I never reckoned I'd meet ye. Things is queer, and trav'lin' brings all sorter people together. My darter Looeze suspected ye from the first, and she worried over it, and kinder put me up to this.'

The most delicate flattery could not have done more. To have been in the thought of this reserved gentle girl, who scarcely seemed to notice even those who had paid her attention, was—

'She put me up to it,' he continued calmly, 'though she, herself, hez a kind o' pre-judise again you and your writins—thinkin' them sort o' low down, and the folks talked about not in her style—and ye know that's woman's nater, and she and Miss Montmorris agree on that point. But thar's a few friends with me round yer ez would like to see ye.' He stepped aside and a dozen men appeared in Indian file from behind the round-house, and, with a solemnity known only to the Anglo-Saxon nature, shook my hand deliberately, and then dispersed themselves in various serious attitudes against the railings. They were honest, well-meaning countrymen of mine, but I could not recall a single face.

There was a dead silence; the screw, however, ostentatiously went on. 'You see what I told you,' it said. 'This is all vapidty and trifling. I'm the only fellow here with a purpose. Whiz, whiz, whiz; chug, chug, chug!'

I was about to make some remark of a general nature, when I was greatly relieved to observe my companion's friends detach themselves from the railings, and, with a slight bow and another shake of the hand, severally retire, apparently as much relieved as myself. My companion, who had in the mean time acted as if he had discharged himself of a duty, said, 'Thar ollers must be some one to tend to this kind o' thing, or thar's no sociableness. I took a deppytation into the cap'n's room yesterday to make some proppy-sitions, and thar's a minister of the Gospel aboard ez orter be spoke to afore next Sunday, and I reckon it's my dooty, onless,' he added with deliberate and formal politeness, '*you'd* prefer to do it—bein' so to speak a public man.'

But the public man hastily deprecated any interference with

the speaker's functions, and, to change the conversation, remarked that he had heard that there were a party of Cook's tourists on board, and—were not the preceding gentlemen of the number? But the question caused the speaker to lay aside his hat, take a comfortable position on the deck, against the rail, and, drawing his knees up under his chin, to begin as follows:—

'Speaking o' Cook and Cook's tourists, I'm my own Cook! I reckon I calkilate and know every cent that I'll spend 'twixt Evansville, Injianny, and Rome and Naples, and everything I'll see.' He paused a moment, and, laying his hand familiarly on my knee, said, 'Did I ever tell ye how I kem to go abroad?'

As we had never spoken together before, it was safe to reply that he had *not*. He rubbed his head softly with his hand, knitted his iron grey brows, and then said meditatively, 'No! it must hev been that head waiter. He sorter favors you in the musstache and gen'ral get up. I guess it war him I spoke to.'

I thought it must have been.

'Well, then, this is the way it kem about. I was sittin one night, about three months ago, with my darter Looeze—my wife bein' dead some four year—and I was reading to her out of the paper about the Exposition. She sez to me, quiet-like,—she's a quiet sort o' gal if you ever notissed her,—"I should like to go thar;" I looks at her—it was the first time sense her mother died that that gal had ever asked for anything, or had, so to speak, a wish. It wasn't her way. She took everything ez it kem, and durn my skin ef I ever could tell whether she ever wanted it to kem in any other way. I never told ye this afore, did I?'

'No,' I said hastily. 'Go on.'

He felt his knees for a moment, and then drew a long breath. 'Perhaps,' he began deliberately, 'ye don't know that I'm a poor man. Seein me here among these rich folks, goin abroad to Parée with the best o' them, and Looeze thar—in the first cabin—a lady, ez she is—ye wouldn't b'leeve it, but I'm poor! I am. Well, sir, when that gal looks up at me and sez that—I hadn't but twelve dollars in my pocket and I ain't the durned fool that I look—but suthin in me—suthin, you know, a way back in me—sez, You shall! Loo-ey, you shall! and then I sez—repeatin it, and looking up right in her eyes—"You shall go, Loo-ey"—did you ever look in my gal's eyes?'

I parried that somewhat direct question by another, 'But the twelve dollars—how did you increase *that*?'

'I raised it to two hundred and fifty dollars. I got odd jobs o' work here and there, overtime—I'm a machinist. I used to keep this yer over-work from Loo—saying I had to see men in

the evenin' to get pints about Europe—and that—and getting a little money raised on my life-insurance, I shoved her through. And here we is. Chipper and first class—all through—that is, Loo is!'

'But two hundred and fifty dollars! And Rome and Naples and return? You can't do it.'

He looked at me cunningly a moment. 'Kan't do it? I've done it!'

'Done it?'

'Wall, about the same, I reckon: I've figgered it out. Figgers don't lie. I ain't no Cook's tourist; I kin see Cook and give him pints. I tell you I've figgered it out to a cent, and I've money to spare. Of course I don't reckon to travel with Loo. She'll go first class. But I'll be near her if it's in the steerage of a ship, or in the baggage car of a railroad. I don't need much in the way of grub or clothes, and now and then I kin pick up a job. Perhaps you disremember that row I had down in the engine-room, when they chucked me out of it?'

I could not help looking at him with astonishment; there was evidently only a pleasant memory in his mind. Yet I recalled that I had felt indignant for him and his daughter.

'Well, that dam fool of a Dutchman, that chief engineer, gives me a job the other day. And ef I hadn't just forced my way down there, and talked sasy at him, and criticised his macheen, he'd hev never knowed I knowed a eccentric from a waggon-wheel. Do you see the pint?'

I thought I began to see it. But I could not help asking what his daughter thought of his travelling in this inferior way.

He laughed. 'When I was gettin up some pints from them books of travel I read her a proverb or saying outer one o' them, that "only princes and fools and Americans travelled first class." You see I told her it didn't say "women," for they naterally would ride first class—and Amerikan gals being Princesses, didn't count. Don't you see?'

If I did not quite follow his logic, nor see my way clearly into his daughter's acquiescence through this speech, some light may be thrown upon it by his next utterance. I had risen with some vague words of congratulation on his success, and was about to leave him, when he called me back.

'Did I tell ye,' he said, cautiously looking around, yet with a smile of stifled enjoyment in his face, 'did I tell ye what that gal—my darter—sed to me? No, I didn't tell ye—nor no one else afore. Come here!'

He made me draw down closely into the shadow and secrecy of the round-house.

'That night that I told my gal she should go abroad, I sez to her quite chipper like and free, "I say, Looey," sez I, "ye'll be goin for to marry some o' them counts or dukes, or poten-tates, I reckon, and ye'll leave the old man." And she sez, sez she, lookin me squar in the eye—did ye ever notiss that gal's eye?'

'She has fine eyes,' I replied, cautiously.

'They is ez clean as a fresh milk-pan and ez bright. Nothin sticks to 'em. Eh?'

'You are right.'

'Well, she looks up at me this way,' here he achieved a vile imitation of his daughter's modest glance, not at all like her, 'and, looking at me, she sez quietly, "That's what I'm goin for, and to improve my mind." He! he! he! It's a fack! To marry a nobleman, and im-prove her mind! Ha! Ha! Ha!'

The evident enjoyment that he took in this, and the quiet ignoring of anything of a moral quality in his daughter's sentiments, or in his thus confiding them to a stranger's ear, again upset all my theories. I may say here that it is one of the evidences of original character, that it is apt to baffle all prognosis from a mere observer's standpoint. But I recalled it some months after.

We parted in England. It is not necessary, in this brief chronicle, to repeat the various stories of 'Uncle Joshua,' as the younger and more frivolous of our passengers called him, nor that two-thirds of the stories repeated were utterly at variance with my estimate of the character of the man, although I may add that I was also doubtful of the accuracy of my own estimate. But one quality was always dominant—his resistless, dogged pertinacity and calm imperturbability! 'He asked Miss Montmorris if she "minded" singin a little in the second cabin to liven it up, and added, as an inducement, that they didn't know good music from bad,' said Jack Walker to me. 'And when he mended the broken lock of my trunk, he abtholutely propothed to me to athk couthin Grath if thee didn't want a "koorier" to travel with her to "do mechanics," provided thee would take charge of that dreadfully deaf-and-dumb daughter of his. Woثن't it funny? Really he'th one of your characters,' said the youngest Miss Montmorris to me as we made our adieu on the steamer.

I am afraid he was *not*, although he was good enough afterwards to establish one or two of my theories regarding him. I was enabled to assist him once in an altercation he had with a cabman regarding the fare of his daughter, the cabman retaining a distinct im-

pression that the father had also ridden in some obscure way in or upon the same cab—as he undoubtedly had—and I grieve to say, foolishly. I heard that he had forced his way into a certain great house in England, and that he was ignominiously rejected, but I also heard that ample apologies had been made to a certain quiet modest daughter of his who was without on the lawn, and that also a certain Personage, whom I approach, even in this vague way, with a capital letter, had graciously taken a fancy to the poor child, and had invited her to a reception.

But this is only hearsay evidence. So also is the story which met me in Paris, that he had been up with his daughter in the captive balloon, and that at an elevation of several thousand feet from the earth he had made some remarks upon the attaching cable and the drum on which the cable revolved, which not only excited the interest of the passengers, but attracted the attention of the authorities, so that he was not only given a gratuitous ascent afterwards, but was, I am told, offered some gratuity. But I shall restrict this narrative to the few facts of which I was personally cognizant in the career of this remarkable man.

I was at a certain entertainment given in Paris by the heirs, executors, and assignees of an admirable man, long since gathered to his fathers in Père la Chaise, but whose Shakespeare-like bust still looks calmly and benevolently down on the riotous revelry of absurd wickedness of which he was, when living, the patron saint. The entertainment was of such a character that, while the performers were chiefly women, a majority of the spectators were men. The few exceptions were foreigners, and among them I quickly recognised my fair fellow-countrywomen, the Montmorrises. 'Don't thay that you've theen us here,' said the youngest Miss Montmorris, 'for ith only a lark. Ith awfully funny! And that friend of yourth from Injianny ith here with hith daughter.' It did not take me long to find my friend Uncle Joshua's serious, practical, unsympathetic face in the front row of tables and benches. But beside him, to my utter consternation, was his shy and modest daughter. In another moment I was at his side. 'I really think—I am afraid—' I began in a whisper, 'that you have made a mistake. I don't think you can be aware of the character of this place. Your daughter——'

'Kem here with Miss Montmorris. She's yer. It's all right.'

I was at my wits' end. Happily, at this moment Mdlle. Rochefort from the *Orangerie* skipped out in the quadrille immediately before us, caught her light skirts in either hand, and executed a *pas* that lifted the hat from the eyes of some of the front spectators and pulled it down over the eyes of others. The Montmorrises

fluttered away with a half-hysterical giggle and a half-confounded escort. The modest-looking Miss Loo, who had been staring at everything quite indifferently, suddenly stepped forward, took her father's arm, and said sharply, 'Come.'

At this moment, a voice in English, but unmistakably belonging to the politest nation in the world, rose from behind the girl, mimickingly. 'My God! it is schocking. I bloosh! O dammit!'

In an instant he was in the hands of 'Uncle Joshua,' and forced back clamouring against the railing, his hat smashed over his foolish furious face, and half his shirt and cravat in the old man's strong grip. Several students rushed to the rescue of their compatriot, but one or two Englishmen and half a dozen Americans had managed in some mysterious way to bound into the arena. I looked hurriedly for Miss Louisa, but she was gone. When we had extricated the old man from the *mêlée*, I asked him where she was.

'Oh, I reckon she's gone off with Sir Arthur. I saw him here just as I pitched into that dam fool.'

'Sir Arthur?' I asked.

'Yes, an acquaintance o' Loo's.'

'She's in my carriage, just outside,' interrupted a handsome young fellow, with the shoulders of a giant and the blushes of a girl. 'It's all over now, you know. It was rather a foolish lark, you coming here with her without knowing—you know—anything about it, you know. But this way—thank you. She's waiting for you,' and in another instant he and the old man had vanished.

Nor did I see him again until he stepped into the railway carriage with me on his way to Liverpool. 'You see I'm trav'lin first class now,' he said, 'but goin' home I don't mind a trifle extry expense.' 'Then you've made your tour,' I asked, 'and are successful?' 'Wall yes, we saw Switzerland and Italy, and if I hedn't been short o' time, we'd hev gone to Egypt. Mebbe next winter I'll run over again to see Loo, and do it.' 'Then your daughter does not return with you?' I continued in some astonishment. 'Wall no—she's visiting some of Sir Arthur's relatives in Kent. Sir Arthur is there—perhaps you recollect him?' He paused a moment, looked cautiously around, and, with the same enjoyment he had shown on shipboard, said, 'Do you remember the joke I told you on Loo, when she was at sea?'

'Yes.'

'Well, don't ye say anything about it *now*. But dem my skin, if it doesn't look like coming true.'

And it did,

The Reader of Plays.

BY DUTTON COOK.

THE world moving on leaves behind it various employments and professions as so much mere lumber or litter, useless and exhausted, not worth caring for any longer or carrying further. No doubt alchemists and stage-coachmen, postilions and astrologers, arquebusiers and barber-surgeons, chair-porters and knights-templars, were of value and significance in their day; but society and civilisation have managed by degrees to outgrow them and dispense with their services; and they are now as the extinct animals, whose remains, occasionally discovered, reveal an antediluvian state of existence, or as dim figures derelict upon a distant shore: nor time nor tide waited for them, and the ship that erewhile bore them has long since sailed away, forsaking them, with all its canvas spread.

Among these effete occupations may be classed the office of Reader of Plays—but by this term ordinary reading of plays for the purposes of amusement is by no means signified. In the eighteenth century the last new play secured as many readers as the last new novel finds nowadays; and there were then many more new plays than new novels. No one reads plays at the present date, probably for the excellent reason that there are none, or so very few, to read. Modern plays are rarely published, or are printed almost exclusively for the use of the performers, and are addressed solely to theatre-goers: they seek no public among the readers of books. In the last century plays formed the most admired light literature; and the country ladies and gentlemen, who could only at long intervals contrive to visit London, were punctually supplied with copies of the plays as fast as they were produced, and so informed themselves of the proceedings, recreations, and topics of the town. Few could now be found anxious to peruse such a work, let us say, as Mr. Moore's doleful tragedy of 'The Gamester'; yet, immediately upon its performance at Drury Lane in 1753, a copy of the play was duly forwarded to the amiable Mrs. Delany in Ireland. She writes, 'I have read and wept over the "Gamester." The characters are pretty, the language poor, but some pretty strokes in it, and I think it a very pretty play to be at this time represented.'

The Reader of Plays was an officer appointed by the theatrical

manager to read on his behalf and pronounce concerning the merits of all dramatic writings submitted to him as worthy of being produced upon his stage. The publisher is still assisted by a reader of manuscripts, who tenders advice as to their fitness for publication. Formerly the manager had likewise his reader, engaged for the season, or for a term of years, and paid a regular salary for his services. Who first filled this post it would be hard to say; the necessity of such an appointment was not perhaps immediately perceptible, or was a matter of gradual growth. As plays accumulated upon the manager's hands, or he found himself insufficiently skilled or lettered to decide as to their qualities, he was probably compelled to seek counsel of his friends, and at last to retain permanently the aid of a competent adviser. That this official Reader of Plays was viewed at one time as a personage of very considerable importance is manifested by the publication some fifty years ago of a pamphlet entitled, 'Epistolary Remonstrance to Thomas Morton, Esq., Dramatic Writer and Professed Critic and Reader to Captain Polhill and His Majesty's Servants of Drury Lane Theatre.' Captain Polhill, it may be noted, was a gentleman of fortune, who for a term became a manager, employing Morton, the dramatist, as his Reader of Plays. It may seem strange that the author of the pamphlet should have treated as a subject of public interest what was really a private arrangement. But the theatres then enjoyed peculiar privileges in the nature of monopolies, and this fact, it was thought, justified intervention in the matter on behalf of the public and their rights. Moreover, the author sought redress because of the individual grievances he had endured: he had written a play for which he vainly sought representation; he disputed the competency of the tribunal deciding against him, and claimed to be heard upon the question. He declared that all legitimate dramas worthy of the stage should have a chance of representation, and complained that so far was this from being the case that the theatre was viewed merely as private property, without regard to the rights of the public: the proprietor for the time being appointing a person to examine all plays proffered for performance, who, guided at best by regard for the supposed interests of his employer, dealt with dramas far more with reference to their effects on the treasury than to their real merits. This arrangement, which in these times would hardly be deemed open to rebuke or, indeed, remark, was denounced as both humiliating and monstrously unjust: 'for even supposing the chosen examiner to be a man of confessedly first-rate taste and judgment, he may still have his partialities and prejudices; and allowing further that he may be exempt even from these, still he is but an in-

dividual, and it is not to be expected, from the most accomplished and immaculate on the score of integrity, that he should be capable of being just in his examination of all the varieties and productions which officially come before him.' Mr. Morton's competency was sharply questioned, and it was contended that the author of such plays as he had produced, and to which he owed his reputation and his office, 'must necessarily be deficient in those qualities which constitute a competent critic of pieces of a high order; and, therefore, that the injustice of leaving dramatic authors without a tribunal at which they can be adequately appreciated,' was then, so far as Drury Lane was concerned, 'in the fulness of pernicious existence.' The plays of Mr. Morton were next subjected to severe criticism, and condemnation passed upon his decisions as to the dramas of others submitted to his consideration. 'No man,' proceeds the pamphleteer, 'is free to utter opinions which carry judgment without appeal. With your censure a work is all but undone; for a knowledge of such rejection creates prejudice with the rival theatre, infected with similar pollution, and where three hundred prior offerings take precedence in the perusal of some similar Reader to the Household.' Then, lest advice should be tendered him to print his play and shame the fools, he writes, 'To seek public notice and indemnity through the *dernier ressort* of publication is certain earnest of a deadborn poem and irrecoverable expense. Every work of dramatic merit we expect to see on the stage, and when one is offered to us at the hands of the booksellers we receive it with suspicion and read it with prejudice; for the mode of its introduction implies theatrical reprobation, and, without considering the possible incompetency, dishonesty, or temerity of managerial judgment, we take it for granted that errors exist somewhere, in word or plan, which, although imperceptible to us, render the outcast unworthy of representation. From this impression not even the fame of their defrauded writers could rescue "Werner" and "Fazio," till chance produced them on the stage, when their success gave the positive lie to the opinions of managers' own readers. If such then was the fate of those distinguished men what has the dishonoured play of an obscurer author to expect? Or had your own works been only known in print, where had been the reputation of Mr. Thomas Morton?'

It may be concluded from this rather acrimonious 'Epistolary Remonstrance' that plays were no longer printed for the sake of the reading public. Already novels had risen to greater importance; dramas were now dependent upon the patronage of the theatre-goers, and needed representation upon the stage, otherwise 'mere

oblivion' was their doom. Of the letter-writer and his neglected play nothing further can be stated. Probably he remains to this day an unacted dramatist for all his contemptuous opinion of a playwright so skilled and so successful as the author of 'Speed the Plough' and 'A Cure for the Heartache.' Underrating those productions, he was very likely to overvalue his own.

The Elizabethan dramatists seem to have been curiously indifferent as to the fate of their plays, and generally abandoned all care of them after selling them for representation to a manager or a company of actors. Ben Jonson is usually credited with exceptional conduct in superintending the production of his works in 1616—he was much derided by certain critics for bestowing upon such trivialities as plays the ambitious title of 'Works.' Few of his contemporaries showed equal regard for their reputation. It is probable, however, that the poets usually sold the copyright of their plays as well as the right to perform them. Mr. Payne Collier suggests that the printing of plays might have been prejudicial to the interests of the managers, 'not merely because public curiosity would thereby to a certain extent be gratified, but because rival companies would thus be enabled to represent their pieces.' Plays, however, were frequently printed without the sanction of their authors and with piratical intentions. Heywood speaks of sundry of his plays as 'accidentally' printed, and 'therefore so corrupt and mangled, copied only by the ear, that I have been as unable to know them as ashamed to challenge them.' On another occasion he explains why so few of the two hundred and twenty plays he had been concerned in producing, (having had in them either 'an entire hand or at least a main finger,') had ever been published. 'True it is,' he writes, 'that my plays are not exposed unto the world in volumes to bear the titles of "Works" (as others): one reason is that many of them, by shifting and change of companies, have been negligently lost; others of them are still retained in the hands of some actors who think it against their peculiar profit to have them come into print; and a third that it never was any great ambition in me to be in this kind voluminously read.' Occasionally it was necessary to bribe the printer to abstain from publishing some particular play. The aid of the Court of Chancery was not invoked in those days to restrain printer or publisher by means of injunction: authors and managers were left to buy off the offender, dealing privately with him as best they might. The diary of Henslowe the manager contains an entry: 'Lent unto Robert Shaw, March 18, 1599, to give unto the printer to stay the printing of "Patient Grissell," 40s.' This was the play of which Chettle, Dekker, and Haughton

were the joint authors. Clearly there existed a play-reading public in those times. Prynne, in the Epistle Dedicatory of his 'Histriomastix,' 1633, complains of 'above forty thousand play-books printed within two years (as stationers inform me), they being now more vendible than the choicest sermons.' He must mean, of course, forty thousand copies of plays, and not forty thousand distinct plays. There is no evidence, however, of the existence at this time of an official Reader of Plays in the service of the managers, who proceeded in the matter presumably upon their own discretion and judgment.

Mr. John Jackson, actor, manager, and dramatist, in his 'History of the Scottish Stage,' published in 1793, has described the methods of treating authors followed by David Garrick at Drury Lane, and by John Rich, the manager of Covent Garden. Mr. Jackson held the rejected dramatist, to be the inveterate foe of the manager. 'He is either instantly denounced as a most stupid blockhead, or, being a writer himself, is accused as a jealous, purloining scribbler; and consequently unfit to fill the situation in which he is placed.' Garrick in his dealings with authors was tremblingly alive to the dangers of offending them and of their seeking vengeance in lampoons, pasquinades, and severe criticism. His dread of ridicule and satire was singularly vivid. He was cautious therefore, complaisant of manner, avoiding as much as possible any direct decision. It is not clear, however, that his temporising, diplomatic demeanour was really of much service to him. Returning a play to its author he would say, with tricks of voice and gesture acquired, it was alleged, in imitation of Lord Mansfield: 'I do assure you, sir, I read your play with a good deal of pleasure. It is not destitute of merit. Some alteration in the arrangement of the scenes, and a few additions to the last act to render the *dénouement* a little more dramatic, which might be pointed out . . . And then I really think . . . Hey? Why now, brother George, is not that your opinion? Hey? Do you think we might not risk it?' This was to George Garrick, the manager's faithful assistant, always present upon these occasions. Then turning again to the author, he resumed in an altered tone: 'However, sir, if it had all the merit in the world it would be impossible for me to make room for it at present, or for even one or two seasons to come. At some future period, when I am relieved from the engagements I have made, I might perhaps find an opening; and, as I observed, sir, with the alterations I could point out I know not but your piece might merit a trial. I am sorry I should be so situated at present. But prior engagements, you know, must be kept. Good morning, sir. John, show the gentleman out.' Relieved of

his visitors 'with all those flourishes with which his nature was so plentifully endowed,' he promptly forbade the door to be opened to them again, 'leaving the result of his *half yea and half nay* declarations to the chapter of accidents. In all probability before the specified period came round, from inclination, situation, or circumstances, the parties were differently disposed, and, consequently, peaceably and speciously got rid of.' Occasionally, however, 'the complaisant expressions of the manager were construed into a promise which, after a variety of delays and excuses, he was obliged to make good, and by that means compromise with the claimant at the expense of his judgment.' This was especially the case when the author was supported by any degree of personal interest. Patrons existed in those days, and could bring to bear considerable influence upon managers and players. Cibber, mentioning 'the persecution of bad authors' as among 'the more disagreeable distresses' of theatrical management, refers also to 'the fine gentlemen authors,' and 'the recommendation or, rather, imposition of some great persons whom it was not prudence to disoblige.' But the plays thus forced upon the stage were apt to be quickly driven from it again. The short-lived drama was forthwith published, with a preface abusing the actors for obstructing the success of it, 'while,' adds Cibber, 'the town publicly damned us for our private civility.' And he tells of a solemn bard, who, like Bays, wrote only for fame and reputation, on the second night's performance of his tragedy, 'marching in a stately full-bottomed periwig into the lobby of the house with a lady of condition in his hand,' only to receive the mortifying intelligence from the box-keeper, "'Sir, we have dismissed; there was not company enough to pay for the candles.'"

Rich, famous as a barlequin and successful as a manager, was very rude of manner and grossly illiterate. He always affected ignorance of the name of the person addressing him, he took snuff frequently and in large pinches, and was fond of stroking a tabby cat which usually sat upon his knee. Jackson relates that one night he was playing cards with the Covent Garden manager, assisted by his daughter Miss Rich, and his friend Mr. Bencraft, when a gentleman was announced, who, declaring his business to be of importance, was forthwith admitted.

'Well, Mister,' said Rich, 'what may your pleasure be?'

The visitor proved to be a dramatic author.

'Mr. Rich,' he replied rather sharply, 'three months ago I left a manuscript play with you. You assured me that you would read it the first opportunity. I cannot help thinking that you have had ample time to read my play and to make up your mind about

it. You will excuse my anxiety upon the subject. But I have called now, as I have called many times before, to learn the fate of my play.'

'Why, look you, Mister,' said Rich, 'I have no leisure now to read manuscripts. When my new pantomime is ready, I may, perhaps, get a look at them. There they lie, a whole regiment of them—opera, farce, and blank verse. You shall have your turn—all in good time. I dare say, Mister, about the end of next season I shall be able to give you my opinion.'

'As that is the case, Mr. Rich,' observed the dramatist with some warmth, 'I beg you will return me the manuscript; and I will not again break in upon your repose or thus unseasonably interrupt your amusement.'

'Oh, to be sure, Mister,' said Rich, 'I have no wish to retain your play. Here, Thomas'—this was to the servant—'look in that drawer near the window, and give Mr. What's-his-name his play. You will know it again, I suppose, Mister?' Then, turning to the cardplayers, he asked, 'How stands the game? Seven to five and hearts trumps. There's the deuce. Now, Mister my partner, try what you can do.'

But the search for the play proved to be vain.

'Sir, my play is not here,' cried the disconcerted author at last.

'Is it not? Why, then, pick and choose, Mister,' said Rich coolly. 'There's plenty of them. Suit yourself. Turn them over and over, and take which you like best. A thousand to one but you'll find it better than your own, Mister, and answer your purpose quite as well.'

The author retired, feeling that in his person dramatic literature had been much outraged.

A story of like purport has been related of Sheridan, whose indolence and recklessness as a manager involved him in frequent disputes with the dramatists of his time. They not only complained of the loss or neglect of their manuscripts, but 'boldly asserted that their plots, their incidents, their conversations, were pilfered and brought out in such shapes that the parent only recognised his offspring by some unmistakable feature.' Sheridan satirised this accusation in the 'Critic' when Sir Fretful is made to declare that he will never, while he lives, send a play to Drury Lane—the manager 'writes himself.' And he adds, 'a dexterous plagiarist may do anything. Why, sir, for aught I know, he might take out some of the best things in my tragedy, and put them into his own comedy.'

Sheridan's management of Drury Lane Theatre ended with its

total destruction by fire on February 24, 1809. The new theatre opened on October 10, 1812, under the direction of a committee of noblemen and gentlemen. Lord Byron, who had joined this committee, had been anxious that Tom Moore should be one of his colleagues, and thus wrote to him upon the subject : ' I wished and wish you were in the Committee with all my heart. It seems so hopeless a business, that the company of a friend would be quite consoling. . . . All my new functions consist in listening to the despair of Cavendish Bradshaw, the hopes of Kinnaird, the wishes of Lord Essex, the complaints of Whitbread, and the calculations of Peter Moore—all of which and whom seem totally at variance. C. Bradshaw wants to light the theatre with gas, which may perhaps (if the vulgar be believed) poison half the audience and all the *dramatis personæ*. Essex has endeavoured to persuade Kean not to get drunk ; the consequence of which is that he has never been sober since. Kinnaird, with equal success, would have convinced Raymond [the stage-manager] that he, the said Raymond, had too much salary. Whitbread wants us to assess the pit another sixpence—a d—d insidious proposition, which will end in an O. P. combustion. To crown all, Robins, the auctioneer, has the impudence to be displeased because he has no dividend. The villain is a proprietor of shares and a long-lunged orator in the meetings. I hear he has prophesied our incapacity,' &c. &c.

Lord Byron has further stated that when he belonged to the Drury Lane Committee, and was one of the sub-committee of management, ' the number of plays upon the shelves was about five hundred.' Conceiving that amongst these there must be some of merit, in person and by proxy he caused an investigation. ' I do not think,' he writes, ' that of those which I saw there was one which could be conscientiously tolerated. There never were such things as most of them ! . . . Then the scenes I had to go through ! The authors and the authoresses, and the wild Irishmen, the people from Brighton, from Blackwall, from Chatham, from Cheltenham, from Dublin, from Dundee—who came in upon me ! to all of whom it was proper to give a civil answer, and a hearing, and a reading. Mrs. Glover's father, an Irish dancing-master of sixty years, calling upon me to request to play Archer, dressed in silk stockings on a frosty morning to show his legs (which were certainly good and Irish for his age, and had been still better) ; Miss Emma Somebody, with a play entitled ' The Bandit of Bohemia,' or some such title or production ; Mr. O'Higgins, then resident at Richmond, with an Irish tragedy, in which the unities could not fail to be observed, for the protagonist was chained by the leg to a pillar during the chief part of the performance. He was a wild man of

a savage appearance, and the difficulty of *not* laughing at him was only to be got over by reflecting upon the probable consequences of such cachinnation. As I am really a civil and polite person, and *do* hate giving pain when it can be avoided, I sent them up to Douglas Kinnaird, who is a man of business, and sufficiently ready with a negative—and left them to settle with him.’

Tom Dibdin, the contriver of innumerable pantomimes, and for some years prompter at Drury Lane Theatre, seems also to have rendered assistance as Reader of Plays, altering and adapting them for performance, and communicating with their authors. Like functions appear to have been performed at Covent Garden by Frederick Reynolds the dramatist, who writes of his office—‘What was the name of my situation, however, I never could learn. Some called me “whipper-in to the tragedians,” many “ferret to the painters and composers,” and others “maid of all work” to the manager, who himself called me *thinker*, at the same time kindly allowing me, without injury to my morals, to be a *free* thinker. But though I cannot attach a name to the office, I can say something of the office, which certainly was no sinecure, having to suggest or to execute through the whole year any project that might be conducive to the success of the treasury.’

Mr. Alfred Bunn, nicknamed ‘the poet Bunn,’ whose experience of theatrical affairs had been extensive—a spirited impresario himself, he had served a long apprenticeship to management as the lieutenant now of Elliston and now of Captain Polhill—in his book entitled ‘The Stage, both Before and Behind the Curtain, from Observations taken on the Spot,’ has recorded his trials in regard to the plays submitted to him for production. ‘As respects authors,’ he writes, ‘a great source of perplexity to an *entrepreneur*, the difficulty is not so frightful by any means in dealing with those of acknowledged reputation and consequent utility as with those who are candidates for the glory of seeing their works on the stage and themselves in print. Of some hundreds of pieces sent promiscuously by unknown writers to the manager, during my appearance in that capacity, there was but one deemed fit for representation, and amongst those submitted by men of note many were found to be fraught with danger and were dismissed accordingly.’ Further Mr. Bunn published a list of plays submitted to Mr. Morton, the official reader and examiner of plays to Drury Lane, with his report upon their merits and demerits. Certain of the items may be here reproduced:—

‘*Paired Off*—The plan, characters, and dialogue of the piece are by no means objectionable, but I fear it is not up to the mark as to the breadth necessary for a one-act piece. The part intended

for Mrs. Glover is tame, and what she could or would do nothing with.

‘*Nicolas Pedrossa*—Sad stuff—to be returned.

‘*The Adventurers*—Not worth adventuring—sure to be damned.

‘*Perversion*—Cannot be acted.

‘*Theory and Practice*—The subject of this play is paper money, but the author’s MS. can never be changed into cash.

‘*The Way to get Mad*—May be returned to Mr. Heaven-knows-who, for I can’t even make out the author’s name.

‘*Whitefeet*—This piece is quite unfitted for representation.

‘*The Iron Shroud*—Avoid it.

‘*Panthea*—Read the last page. Six people stab themselves in less than six minutes—four of them eunuchs!

‘*Edelbert*—Respectably written; but of what use to Drury Lane would be a respectable Saxon tragedy?

‘*The Assassin*—Is unskilful and unavailable.

‘*Imbio, or the Requital*—Nonsense.

‘*The Refusal*—No better.

‘*Prince of Naples*—Won’t do.

‘*The Two Catherines*—The perusal took me more time to understand than half-a-dozen better ones, and, after all, the riddle was not worth finding out. It cannot be used.

‘*One Fool makes Many*—The author, I am sorry to say, is one of the many.

‘*The Dead Alive*—Quite hopeless.

‘*Swamp Hall*—This piece I have either read or seen before, as all the circumstances are familiar to me. Won’t do at all.

‘*The Baby*—Hasty and trivial. The inviting thing is the title, which I think a good one; but the business is commonplace.

‘*The Podesta*—This play could not advantageously be acted. The plot is complicated—to an audience inexplicable; it has all the confusion of an Italian feud, but none of the grandeur of a Frisco or a Foscari. There is some poetry, some dramatic power, and some dramatic situation; but not enough to balance the defects.

‘*By the King’s Order*—A bustling affair, but very dangerous.

‘*Marriage à la Mode*—As far as embodying the pictures of Hogarth, the piece is well contrived; but the dialogue is very dull, unrelieved by the least gleam of gaiety. As a drama it is very very humble.

‘*Women as they are*—Very bad.’

Mr. Bunn concludes: ‘It may therefore readily be believed that when some hundreds of pieces of the quality described are

submitted to the decision of the manager of a theatre, the task of deciding, to say nothing of reading, is quite harassing enough.'

Macready, undertaking the management of Covent Garden Theatre in 1837, enters in his journal: 'Wrote to Kenny, offering him the office of Reader, at 3*l.* per week'—a salary which is certainly of modest amount. Kenny is now chiefly known as the author of 'Raising the Wind,' but he was in his time a very popular playwright and adapter. In later years Macready was assisted in like manner by Mr. Serle, also a dramatist of some note formerly, if his plays are no longer freshly remembered. Plays still poured into the theatre, much to the perplexity of the manager when he ventured to examine them on his own behalf. Here are some entries in his diaries in relation to the subject:—
'Looked over two plays, which it was not possible to read, hard as I tried. They are utter trash, and it is really trying to one's patience to lose so much time over such worthless, hopeless stuff. I cannot longer afford the time.' 'Looked through the play of "The Sculptor," and found it a most outrageous absurdity. Wrote a note and addressed it, with the MS. of the author, to be left at the stage door.' 'Two or three persons called, one with a play on the subject of imprisonment for debt, which he did not choose to leave, as the subject was at present popular!' 'Received a parcel from the undaunted Mr. —, who will not be denied; he sends his thrice-rejected play as a present!' 'Visited by a lady . . . a writer of seven tragedies and various farces; this is one of the many who waste life and paper in their hopeless mockery of employment!'

Fitzball, the dramatist, for some seasons officiated as Reader of Stamp at Drury Lane Theatre. He writes: 'I have read as many as two hundred different pieces during a season, not one of which could possibly have suited the establishment; but whenever I saw the slightest chance I always most strenuously urged the manager to peruse it.'

During Mr. Charles Kean's period of management he enjoyed the assistance of the late Mr. J. W. Cole, otherwise Calcraft, as his Reader of Plays. Mr. Cole is further known as the author of the 'Life of Charles Kean.'

Such an office as that of Reader of Plays has now become sound, for the unnecessary reason that there are no plays to read; or perhaps it should rather be said because the modern system of theatrical management is opposed to the production of new plays. These are the days of long runs, when the entertainments of the stage know little variety. The play of to-night will be repeated to-morrow, and so on, week after week, month after month, and

even year after year. Of course manuscripts are sent to managers, for writers of plays are usually sanguine and persistent, armed with a lively faith in the superiority of their own efforts; but the works thus tendered for perusal are little regarded, or often indeed very contumeliously treated. One manager, expressly to discourage aspirants, advertised that he would only receive plays from members of the Dramatic Authors' Society. And the new plays now produced are usually the result of negotiation with an established playwright. It need hardly be said that this is not the way to create or to stimulate the growth of new dramatists; and as a matter of fact we have had no new dramatist for some years past.

Actors have always been accounted very bad judges of plays, and managers and their official readers have often been much mistaken in their appraisement of the works submitted to their consideration. Garrick's repeated errors in regard both to the rejection and the acceptance of new plays exposed him to much ridicule; and in the '*Mémoires Secrets de Bachaumont*,' an apposite story of misjudgment and bungling is related at the expense of that august body, the *Comédie Française*. An obscure author proffered the comedians a little one-act piece in verse, entitled '*Le Droit du Seigneur*.' After much humble solicitation on his part they consented to read it. They pronounced it execrable. He protested against this decision; his comedy had been admired by many persons of taste and quality—had even won the good opinion of M. de Voltaire. The actors treated him with contempt: he had been misled by the applause of people who knew nothing about the matter; M. de Voltaire had but jested. The author was promptly dismissed amidst the jeers and sneers of the assembly. Presently M. de Voltaire offered the *Comédie* his little play, '*L'Ecueil du Sage*.' It was received with the greatest respect; it was read with admiration and delight; M. de Voltaire was proclaimed the benefactor of the comedians. It was certainly mortifying to them afterwards to discover that the comedy of '*L'Ecueil du Sage*' was only '*Le Droit du Seigneur*' with a new name. It was felt that they had justified the rude caricature which represented the tribunal of the Théâtre Français as a group of barbers' blocks adorned with perukes. In justice to the comedians, however, it should be added that M. de Voltaire's play did not please the public by any means when it was subsequently presented upon the stage.

Simpson of Bussora.

BY JAMES PAYN.

I HAVE a profound distrust of all travellers. Not because they are prone to tell me untruths about their experiences, for that has in a great measure become a dangerous experiment: wherever they may have been, other people have now also been, and it is easy, if I may use a professional expression, to 'correct their proofs;' my distrust arises from the ideas in my own mind of the experiences that they do *not* tell me. When they get away from the regions of civilisation, and out of the influence of public opinion, think I to myself, what is it these people do not do? For the very fact of a man's being a traveller is, between ourselves, by no means a good sign. Why does he not stop at home in the bosom of his family, or, if he has no family, acquire one? It is his duty as a citizen. When a boy runs away from school, it is, of course, the correct thing to call him 'intrepid,' 'gallant,' 'high-spirited,' and 'independent;' but that sort of boy is in reality not—generally speaking—a good boy. It may be very true that a nation owes its nautical supremacy to this description of youth; but he doesn't run away to sea from that distant and patriotic motive; he goes to sea because he doesn't like what is good for him on land; and almost immediately, though that is beside the question, finds he has made a great mistake. Similarly, a man does not go to Tartary or Kamtschatka to improve his mind: if he ventured to tell me *that* (supposing he was not a very tall man, and I had no reason to suppose he had a yataghan or any other outlandish weapon concealed about his person), I should laugh in his face. No: he flies to such obscure regions because the restraints of civilisation are abhorrent to his undisciplined mind, and he has some morbid taste; say, for human flesh—uncooked. The mildest-spoken man I ever met in my life, and the greatest traveller, once confided to me, after a most excellent dinner at our club, that, 'after all,' there was nothing like uncooked food. He did not *say* human flesh, but I knew well enough what he meant. He has repented since of having let out so much, and endeavours to re-assure me by his conventional behaviour and conversation.

'The world is small,' he says (he has been round it two or three times), 'and give him England; for, when all is said, that is the best place to live in;' but this does not deceive me for a moment,

That man is a cannibal at heart. I have seen him look at plump and tender people in a very peculiar way, and I would not trust him alone with my baby for a small fortune. That sweet child would take rank among the 'mysterious disappearances.' He would say, 'How should I know?' like the frog who swallowed the duck's egg; but I should know better than the duck. If you think these apprehensions extreme, you are, of course, welcome to your own opinions: some people are more sanguine than others, and also more simple.

My mind is, I think, a tolerably fair one, and I have never entertained suspicions against those who are compelled to visit distant latitudes against their wills. Queen's messengers, convicts, sailors, etc., etc., may be very respectable persons in their way, notwithstanding where they may have been to. Such was my charitable belief until within the last few days; since which I have seen some reason to change it. One of the quietest and best fellows I ever knew—and I have known him all my life—was Simpson of Bussora. I was at school with him five-and-forty years ago, and though his house of business is at the distant spot just mentioned, I had met him from time to time during his periodical visits to this country, and always found him unchanged—gentle, unassuming, modest, and orthodox in his opinions. Our house does a little business with him in shawls and carpets, but our acquaintance is mainly social. My wife and daughters are very partial to him, and delight in his Persian tales, which are picturesque and full of local colour. He brings them little bottles of scent which perfume the whole neighbourhood, and now and then a scarf that is the envy of their friends. I never however entertained any idea of Simpson as a son-in-law until my wife put it into my head. He lived too far away for me to picture him in such a relation, and though I knew he had made money, I did not think he had made enough to return home and settle. His income was a very handsome one; but living at Bussora, he had given me to understand, was dear, and did not admit of much saving. Above all, Simpson struck me as by no means a marrying man. Whenever the subject of matrimony was mooted, he always smiled in that dry, cynical way which proclaims the confirmed bachelor. Household matters did not interest him; he did not take much to children; he would smoke until the small hours of the morning, and raise his eyebrows when one said it was late, and perhaps one's wife might be sitting up. He would say, 'Really!' as though such an idea as one's wife sitting up for one was preposterous, but could never concern *him*.

I need not go into the causes which led to my conversing with Simpson on the subject of matrimony. Suffice it to say that I did

not do so of my own free-will. I had received instructions from my wife to 'sound' Simpson on the matter, with relation to some 'ideas' that she had got into her head with respect to our second daughter Jane, and 'to hear was to obey,' as they say at Bussora.

'My dear Simpson,' said I, as we were cracking our walnuts together after a little dinner under my own roof, 'I often wonder why a man like you, with a large income and a fine house, as you describe your home to be at Bussora, has never married. It must be rather wretched living out there all alone.'

'Well, it would be, no doubt,' said Simpson, in his quiet way. 'But, Lord bless you! I've been married these twenty years.'

You might have knocked me down with a feather. 'Married these twenty years! You astound me. Why, how was it you never spoke about it?'

'Oh, I don't know; I thought it wouldn't interest you. She was a Persian, you know. If she had been a European, then I should have told you.'

'A Persian wife! Dear me,' said I, 'how funny it seems!' I said 'funny,' but at the same time all the suspicions that I entertained (and now entertain more than ever) respecting travellers and persons who abjure civilisation, crowded into my mind. 'Now, what colour, my dear Simpson, if I may put the question without impertinence, are your children?'

'Well, we've got no children,' said Simpson, in his usual imperturbable tone. 'We never had any.'

I don't quite know why, but somehow or other I thought this creditable to Simpson. It was very wrong in him to have married a Persian, perhaps a fire-worshipper, or at best a Mahomedan, but it was a comfort to think that the evil had, so to speak, stopped there. To think of Simpson with a heap of parti-coloured children, professing, perhaps, their mother's outlandish faith as they grew up, would have been painful to me, in connection with the fact that Simpson was at that moment under my roof, the same roof with my wife and daughters, and that I was the churchwarden of our district church. I forsook at once the particular subject of Simpson's wife to discuss the general subject of polygamy.

'The Persians have more wives than one, have they not?' inquired I.

'Those who can afford it have,' said he; 'but it is not so usual as you may imagine.'

'I need not ask how so profligate a system must needs work,' said I. 'It is a domestic failure, of course?'

'You need not ask the question, as you say,' replied Simpson, cracking a walnut. 'But if you do ask, I am bound to say it is

so far like marriage in this country—it is sometimes a domestic failure and sometimes not. Perhaps it requires more judgment in selection; you have not only to please yourself, you know, but to please your other wives.'

'Goodness gracious!' said I, 'how coolly you talk about it! I hope no European who happens to be resident in this strange community ever gives in to the custom?'

'Some do and some don't,' was the reply of Simpson. 'I lived in Persia with one wife for fifteen years before I gave in.'

'What! you married a second wife, your first wife being alive?'

'Just so,' was the unabashed rejoinder. Simpson swept the walnut shells into a corner of his plate, and helped himself to sherry. 'I have now four wives.'

'Bless my soul and body!' said I. 'Four wives!'

'Yes. The story of my little *ménage* may seem in your ears rather curious. If it will not bore you, I'll tell you about it.'

I had no words to decline the offer, even if I wished it. My breath was fairly taken away by Simpson's four wives. The traveller that had liked his food uncooked had given me rather a turn, but that was nothing to this revelation of my present companion: a man we had always considered of the highest respectability, and who my wife had even thought would have suited our Jane.

'Well, it was at a picnic party on the plains near Bussora that the thing first came about. My wife and I were both present at it; and my European notions preventing my believing there could be the least misunderstanding about it, since I was already married, I made myself very agreeable to a certain Persian lady. She was neither young nor pretty—just like what my wife herself, indeed, had grown to be by that time—and I no more thought of making her my No. 2 than—dear me!—of embracing Mahommedanism. My attentions, however, were misconstrued; and her brother, being a violent man in the Shah's cavalry, and knowing I had a fairish income, insisted upon my becoming his brother-in-law. I believe Irish marriages are often brought about in the same way, so there was nothing in *that*; the peculiarity of the case lay in my having a wife already, and one who was very resolute indeed to prevent my having another.' I spare you the troubles that ensued. Between my No. 1 wife on the one hand, and her sharp tongue, and the officer of Spahis on the other, with his sharp sword, I was placed in a very unpleasant position, I promise you; but in the end I married Khaleda. I am sorry to say the two ladies got on extremely ill together. It was said by a great English wit that when one's wife gets to be forty, one ought to be

allowed to change her for two twenties, like a forty-pound note, and I dare say that would be very nice; but, unhappily, I had now two wives, each forty, if they were a day, and there was no prospect of getting them changed, or parting from them in any way.

‘Pirouzé and Khaleda led me a most unhappy life. They quarrelled from morning to night, and so far from being able to play off one against the other, as I had secretly hoped, I was treated with great unkindness by both of them. They were a matter of very considerable expense, of course, and very little satisfaction. My position, in fact, became intolerable; and as I could please neither of them, I resolved to please myself by marrying No. 3.’

‘A twenty, I suppose?’ said I, interested in spite of myself in this remarkable narration.

‘Well, yes; that is, she would have been a twenty in England, but in Persia young ladies marry a good deal earlier. She was a charming creature, and cost me—’

‘What! did you *buy* her?’ cried I, in astonishment and horror.

‘Well, no, not exactly; her father, however, insisted upon something handsome, and there were heavyish fees to be paid to her mother and sisters, and to the Governor of Bussora. The custom of the country is curious in that respect. After one’s second wife a considerable tax is levied by the government upon marrying men. However, Badoura was worth all the money: she sang, she played divinely; that is, she would have done so if she had not been always crying. Pirouzé and Khaleda made her life utterly miserable. Hitherto they had been at daggers drawn with one another, but now they united together to persecute the unhappy Badoura. Her very life was scarcely safe with them. Wretched as my former lot had been, it was now become unendurable, for one can bear one’s own misery better than that of those we love.’

Here Simpson took out his handkerchief of a beautiful Persian pattern, and pressed it to his eyes. ‘Yes, my dear friend, they led my Badoura a dog’s life—did those two women. I felt myself powerless to protect her, for I was never physically strong; and though I did not understand one-half of the epithets they showered upon her, I could see by the effect they had upon her that they were most injurious—what I have no doubt would in this country be considered actionable. For her, however, there was no remedy, and I think she would have sunk under their persecution had I not married Zobeide.’

‘No. 4!’ cried I, aghast. ‘What on earth did you do that for?’

‘I married Zobeide solely and wholly for Badoura’s sake. I chose her, not for her beauty, nor her virtues, nor her accomplishments, but entirely for her thews and sinews. I said to her, ‘Zobeide, you are a strong and powerful young woman: if I make you my wife, will you protect my lamb?’ and she said, ‘I will.’ It was the most satisfactory investment—I mean, the happiest choice—I ever made. My home is now the abode of peace. In one wing of the house abide Pirouzé and Khaleda, in the other Zobeide and Badoura: two on the east side and two on the west. Each respects the other; for although Pirouzé and Khaleda are strong females, and could each wring the neck of my dear Badoura, Zobeide is stronger than both of them put together, and protects her. Thus the opposing elements are, as it were, neutralized: the combatants respect one another, and I am the head of a united house. I got letters from all of my four wives this morning, each of them most characteristic and interesting: Badoura forgot to pay the postage—she has a soul above pecuniary details—and her letter was the dearest of all.’

‘Don’t cry, Simpson,’ said I—‘don’t cry, old fellow. The steamer goes on Tuesday, and then you will see all your wives again. They will welcome you with outstretched arms—eight outstretched arms, like the octopus.’

I confess I was affected by my friend’s artless narration at that time, though, since I have reflected upon the matter, my moral sense has asserted itself, and is outraged. I state the matter as fairly as I can. I have been to picnics myself, as a married man, and made myself agreeable to the ladies. Well, in Persia this might have cost me my life, or the expense of a second establishment. So far, there is every excuse for Simpson. But, on the other hand, the astounding fact remains that there are four Mrs. Simpsons at Bussora. Whenever I look at his quiet, business-like face, or hear him talking to my wife and the girls about Persian scenery, this revelation of his strikes me anew with wonder. Of course I have not told *them* about his domestic relations; it would be too great a shock to their respective systems; yet the possession of such a secret all to myself is too hard to bear, and I have, therefore, laid it before the public. The whole thing resolves itself into a rule-of-three sum. If even a quiet, respectable fellow like Simpson, residing at Bussora, has *four* wives, how many wives—well, I don’t mean exactly *that*; but how much queerer things must people do who are not so quiet and respectable as Simpson, and who live still further off.

What I saw in an Ants' Nest.

AMONGST those spectacles and incidents in human existence which remain fixed on the memory of the spectator from their sad or unwonted nature, that of a panic-stricken crowd, gathered by the report of some national disaster, stands pre-eminent. Still more terrible in its details is the history of some catastrophe which has laid a city in ruins and wrought death and desolation to thousands of the inhabitants. A deadly epidemic, a fatal plague tearing a nation with its dread, mysterious power is a calamity appalling enough, but the spectacle of a city overthrown at one fell swoop by the earthquake shock may perhaps rank foremost amongst the untoward incidents which environ the sphere of man. A certain event, occurring during a recent holiday by the sea, tended forcibly to impress upon the mind that the great catastrophes of life are not limited to humanity's special sphere, and that in lower life panic and alarm seem to exercise no small influence as in man's estate: whilst the incident referred to also afforded food for reflection on topics not far removed from some weighty matters in the history of man's own nature and constitution. In this latter view, it is especially hoped the observations of a brief period of leisure-time may not be without their due meed of interest.

The chance removal from its secure site of a large stone placed in close proximity to the sea beach, where the bliss of idleness was being fully exemplified by a small party of holiday-makers, proved, on close examination, to be the cause of a literal revolution in lower life. Imagine a city to be totally unroofed; try to conceive of the sudden downfall of houses and buildings, and the consequent panic of the inhabitants, and you may obtain an idea of the disturbance our simple procedure effected in the peaceable, well-ordered colony of ants which had located themselves securely beneath the friendly shelter of the stone. The scene presented to view was one of the most curious and interesting which could engage the attention of an observer in any field of inquiry, and the occurrence certainly banished the idle mood of the time, and lent a zest to the subsequent hours of our holiday. Running hither and thither in wild confusion were the denizens of this underground colony; their six little legs carrying their curious globular bodies backwards and forwards over the disturbed area from which the stone had been removed. At first the movements of the ants were extremely erratic and purposeless. Panic and alarm appeared to be the order of the day during the few minutes

which elapsed after the discovery of the nest. But soon the eye could discern movements of purposive kind on the part of the alarmed residents. There was 'racing and chasing' in all directions; but the ants which had at first radiated from the centre of disturbance, as if on some definite quest, soon returned thereto, and continued to advance and retire from the field of action with tolerable regularity. Not less than sixty or seventy ants appeared to be engaged in this labour of scouring the country around. The object of their repeated journeys in all directions was soon discovered. They were the self-appointed scouts, engaged in the work of reconnoitring. Such at least is a fair interpretation of the acts of the ants, and such also is the conclusion, borne out by the subsequent course of events; for, after the scouts had spent a considerable time in their rapid journeys to the environments of the nest, a new set of ants appeared upon the scene, destined to perform a highly important series of labours.

The scouts still continued their journeyings, and gave one the idea of a set of fussy individuals who were superintending, or even bullying, their new neighbours who appeared from amongst the ruins and *débris* of the ant city, carrying in their mouths certain oval bodies of a dirty white colour, and measuring each about one-third of an inch in length. Each of these bodies closely resembled a grain of corn in shape, size, and appearance. The spectacle of these small insects carrying off these bodies in their powerful jaws impressed one forcibly with the idea that, relatively to its size, an ant is an herculean insect.

Occasionally there might be seen certain rather ludicrous incidents connected with the removal of the objects in question. One ant might be witnessed in the endeavour to hoist the oval body it was carrying in its mouth over some obstacle lying in the path, and the staggering gait of the insect seemed very accurately to mimic the similar disposition of a human porter struggling under a burdensome load. Another ant, carrying the oval body before it, would arrive at a steep incline formed of loose sand, and presenting a treacherous surface even to the light feet of the insect. The efforts of the ant to carry the body upwards being found to be fruitless, the insect might be seen to whirl about with great rapidity of action, and to ascend the hill backwards, pulling the body after it, instead of pushing it as before.

Another instance might be witnessed in which an ant, which had literally come to grief with its burden, would be assisted by a kindly neighbour; but it was no uncommon sight to behold in the excessive eagerness of the insects an actual means of defeating the object they had in view, since two ants would in some cases

seize the same burden, and then came the tug of war. One pulled one way, whilst the other tugged in the opposite direction; and one could almost have supposed that the burden itself might have been parted in twain by the treatment to which it was subjected, the incident affording a new application of the remark that a surfeit of zeal is destructive of the best intentions. The nature of the bodies which the ants seemed so excessively anxious to preserve from injury was readily determined. The oval bodies, resembling grains of corn, were the *pupæ* or *chrysalides* of the ants—the sleeping babies and young hopefuls on whom the hopes of the colony were, and, I may say, are, founded. It is noteworthy, however, that upon some mistaken notion regarding the nature of these bodies many of the ideas concerning the frugal care of these insects were founded. Solomon's advice that the sluggard should 'go to the ant,' with the view of considering her ways and of gaining wisdom as a result of the study, was in days of old thought to be approved by the observation that the ants husbanded their stores of food in the shape of the grains of corn they had gained from the autumnal store. There can be little doubt that some species of ants do store food, but their praiseworthy actions in this direction have been greatly exaggerated; and there appears, indeed, to be some danger of idle persons being prepared with the retort to the wise man, that the ant is by no means the model creature he thought her to be. If, however, the supposed corn-grains prove to be simply the rising generation of ants in their chrysalis state, it may be said that what the ants may have lost in the way of fame in this direction, has been amply compensated for by the discovery of more wonderful traits of character than Solomon could possibly have dreamt of.

The work of removing the developing population thus appeared in our ant-nest to absorb the entire energies of the alarmed denizens. Pupa after pupa was carried out from amongst the *débris* and taken for a considerable distance—certainly fifteen inches—to a place of security, beneath a small sloping stone of flat shape, which roofed over a hollow in the ground. So far as I could observe, the scouts must have discovered this place of refuge, and have communicated the intelligence to their neighbours. The regularity with which the slumbering innocents were conveyed to the same spot would appear to point to concerted work, and to a definite idea, if one may so term it, having animated the labourers. I was careful to ascertain at an early stage of the proceedings that the place of refuge had no communication with the nest. It was, in point of fact, an entirely new habitation, and, as far as an impartial judgment might venture upon an opinion, the new residence appeared to give promise of being a safe and convenient domicile.

Now and then an ant would emerge from the ruins of the nest carrying a younger hopeful in the larva or caterpillar stage. This latter was a little white grub, which corresponds in its development to the grub or caterpillar of the butterfly or fly, the ants thus exemplifying insects which undergo a complete 'metamorphosis.' It was rather a difficult matter to ascertain clearly if the ants were actually excavating the chrysalides from amongst the *débris*. Bearing in mind what Sir John Lubbock has told us concerning the apparent inability of ants to discover the whereabouts of companions buried under earth, I rather lean to the belief that my ants simply conveyed to a place of safety those chrysalides which were at hand and readily obtainable. The latter fact I could not ascertain, since I feared to disturb the ants at their interesting labours, but a simple experiment served to show the feasibility of the idea that the chrysalides were probably within easy reach of the ants. Taking possession of one chrysalis which was being conveyed to the new domicile, I buried it about half an inch deep in the sand, directly in the track over which the ants were journeying to their new residence, and a second I placed at a little distance from this track, but in a spot over which numerous ants were running apparently without any definite aim. The second chrysalis was not buried in any sense, and was covered merely with a sprinkling of sand. The result in both cases was negative. No attempt was made to disinter the chrysalis from the beaten track, although numberless ants walked directly over it, and I extricated the chrysalis five hours after its interment, and when the busy scene of the morning had been replaced by a dull prospect, over which only a single ant now and then hurried in a rapid fashion. The other chrysalis was also unnoticed despite its proximity to the surface of the sand. Whether or not ants want a sense of smell or other means of guiding them to the whereabouts of their neighbours or children, is a subject difficult of determination either towards a positive or negative result. And I am the more inclined to wonder at the incapacity of the insects to discover their buried companions, since they appear to be perfectly capable of detecting them at a considerable distance above ground. When a chrysalis was placed in a spot remote from the nest, and an ant placed within a foot or so of the chrysalis, the insect would occasionally seem to be attracted to the neighbourhood of the object. I frequently observed that if an ant happened to crawl within two or three inches of the chrysalis as it lay on the ground, it appeared to become conscious of the object, although at the same time it seemed ignorant of its precise locality. In such a case the insect would proceed hither and thither in an erratic fashion, but would continue

to hover or rotate around the chrysalis until it seized the object and bore it off in triumph in its jaws. Relatively to the size of the ant, we must consider this latter incident by no means a slight tribute to its acuteness.

The busy scene resulting from the disturbance of the nest proceeded actively during at least two hours. The nest appeared to be by no means a large one. At the end of two hours, however, the ants were still rushing hither and thither, bent on errands unknown to their observers, although the work of conveying the chrysalides had at the lapse of the period just mentioned entirely ceased. Five and a half hours after the nest had been disturbed not an ant was visible in the former scene of activity, and our next task was that of investigating the manner in which the insects had dispersed themselves and their belongings in their new habitation. This labour was commenced by the careful removal of the flat sloping stone already mentioned as that beneath which the main stream of the ants had disappeared. Not an insect was to be seen after this operation was performed; and it was only after the removal of several small stones which lay below the flat stone that the colony in its new sphere was brought into view. Our investigation once again excited the restless beings. Then ensued for the second time the seizure of the chrysalides, which, however, were to be seen packed together in a secure position and already partly covered with particles of earth and sand. To have reached the position in which we found them, the insects must have descended at least three inches after entering below the stone, and the labour of the continual ascent in search of fresh chrysalides must therefore have been of no light kind. We saw enough to convince us that the ants had already settled down in a new organisation which, with an undisturbed history, might repeat the peaceful state of their former life. And we also had presented the thought that, in the exercise of their duties under the pressure of an unwonted exigency, the insects behaved and acted with no small degree of intelligence, and apparently in harmonious concert to the desired end.

But the thoughts suggested by the brief observation of the disturbed ants' nest hardly end thus. We may very naturally proceed to inquire into the regular organisation and constitution of the ant-colony, and also, as far as fact and theory may together lead, into the analogies—if analogies there be—which exist between the social instincts of ants and the ways of the higher animals, man included. The common ants and their neighbours belong to the order of insects known as the *Hymenoptera*, a group represented by other insects of 'social' habits, such as bees, wasps, and hornets. The termites, or white ants of the tropics, are the only 'ants'

foreign to this order of insects, the white ants being near relations of the dragon-flies, May-flies, &c. The family history of the latter, as told by Mr. Bates, may serve to introduce us agreeably to ant society at large. The nests of the termites may attain a height of five feet, and present the appearance of conical hillocks, formed of earth particles 'worked,' says Mr. Bates, 'with a material as hard as stone.' In the neighbourhood of the nests, narrow covered galleries or underground ways are everywhere to be seen, these latter being the passages along which the materials used for building the nests are conveyed. The termites are small soft-bodied animals of a pale colour, but resemble the common or true ants in that they live in colonies composed, like those of bees, of three chief grades of individuals. These grades are known as males, females, and blind 'neuters,' the latter forming at once the largest bulk of the population, and including in their numbers the true 'working-classes' of this curious community. In the common ants, the 'neuters' are regarded as being undeveloped female insects. These neuters exhibit in the termites a further division into ordinary 'workers,' which perform the multifarious duties connected with the ordinary life of the colony, and 'soldiers,' which perfectly exemplify the laws of military organisation in higher life, in that they have no part in the common labour, but devote themselves entirely to the defence of the colony and to the—

'Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war.'

The 'workers' appear to perform a never-ending round of duties. They build the nests, make the roads, attend to the wants of the young, train up the latter in the ways of ant-existence, wait on the sovereigns of the nest, and, like diplomatic courtiers, duly arrange for the royal marriages of the future. As Mr. Bates remarks, 'The wonderful part in the history of the termites is, that not only is there a rigid division of labour, but nature has given to each class a structure of body adapting it to the kind of labour it has to perform. The males and females form a class apart; they do no kind of work, but in the course of growth acquire wings to enable them to issue forth and disseminate their kind. The workers and soldiers are wingless, and differ solely in the shape and armature of the head. This member in the labourers is smooth and rounded, the mouth being adapted for the working of the materials in building the hive. In the soldiers the head is of very large size, and is provided in almost every kind with special organs of offence and defence in the form of horny processes resembling pikes, tridents, and so forth . . . The course of human events in our day seems, unhappily, to make it more

than ever necessary for the citizens of civilised and industrious communities to set apart a numerous armed class for the protection of the rest; in this, nations only do what nature has of old done for the termites. The soldier termite, however, has not only the fighting instinct and function; he is constructed as a soldier, and carries his weapons not in his hand but growing out of his body.' When a colony of termites is disturbed, the ordinary citizens disappear and the military are called out. The soldiers mounted the breach, says Mr. Bates, 'to cover the retreat of the workers' when a hole was made in the archway of one of their covered roads; and with military precision the rear-men fall into the vacant places in the front ranks as the latter are emptied by the misfortune of war.

In a termite colony there is but one king and queen, the royal couple being the true parents of the colony. The royal apartments are situated in the centre of the hive, and are strictly guarded by workers. Both king and queen are wingless, and are of larger size than their subjects. The queen engages in a continual round of maternal duties, the eggs deposited by the sovereign-mother being at once seized by the workers and conveyed to special or 'nursery cells,' where the young are duly tended and brought up. Once a year, at the beginning of the rainy season, winged termites appear in the hive as developments of certain of the eggs laid by the queen-termite. These latter are winged males and females, the two sexes being present in equal numbers. Some of these, after shedding their wings, become the founders—kings and queens—of new communities, the privilege of sex being thus associated with the important and self-denying work of perpetuating the species or race in time. Sooner or later—a termite family takes about a year to grow—a veritable exodus of the young winged termites takes place, and just before this emigration movement occurs a hive may be seen to be stocked with 'termites' of all castes and in all stages of development. The workers never exhibit a change of form during their growth; the soldiers begin to differ from the workers in the possession of larger heads and jaws; whilst the young which are destined to become the winged males and females are distinguished by the early possession of the germs of wings which become larger as the skin is successively moulted. Amongst the bees, blind Huber supposed that an ordinary or neuter egg develops into a queen-bee if the larva is fed upon a special kind of food—'royal food,' as it is called. Although some entomological authorities differ from Huber with regard to the exact means by which the queen-bee is reared and specialised from other larvæ, yet the opinion thus expressed possesses

a large amount of probability. Whatever may be the exact method or causes through or by which the queen-bee is developed, Mr. Bates strongly asserts that the differences between the soldiers and worker termites are distinctly marked from the egg. This latter observer maintains that the difference is not due to variations in food or treatment during their early existence, but is fixed and apparent from the beginning of development. This fact is worthy of note, for it argues in favour of the view that if, as is most likely, the differences between the grades of termites may have originally been produced by natural selection or other causes, these differences have now become part and parcel of the constitution of these insects, and are propagated by the ordinary law of heredity. Thus acquired conditions in time become the natural 'way of life' of living beings.

Mr. Bates has also placed on record the noteworthy fact that a species of termites exists in which the members of the soldier class did not differ at all from the workers 'except in the fighting instinct.' This observation, if it may be used at all in elucidation of the origin of the curious family-life of these insects, points not to sudden creation, but to gradual acquirement and modification as having been the method of development of the specialised classes and castes in termite society. Firstly, we may thus regard the beginnings of the further development of a colony to appear in a nest in which workers and soldiers are alike, as stated by Mr. Bates. Then, through the practice of the fighting instinct, we may conceive that natural selection would be competent to adapt the soldiers more perfectly for their duties militant, by developing the head and jaws as offensive weapons. Possibly, were our knowledge of the termites at all complete, we should meet with all stages in the development and specialisation of the various grades of society amongst these insects—at least, the present state of our knowledge would seem to lead to such a conclusion, as being much more feasible than the theory of special or sudden creation of the peculiarities of the race. It is admitted that the termites are in many respects inferior in structure to the bees and wasps, whilst the white ants themselves are the superiors of their own order—that of the Neuroptera. That the termites preceded the bees and their neighbours, the common ants, in the order of development of social instincts is a conclusion supported by the fact that the Neuroptera form the first group of insects which are preserved to us in the 'records of the rocks.' Fossil Neuroptera occur in the Devonian rocks of North America; the first traces of insects allied to the bees and wasps being of much more recent occurrence, and appearing in the Oolitic strata. The occurrence of high social instincts in an ancient group of insects renders the repetition of

these instincts in a later and higher group the less remarkable. The observation, however, does not of necessity carry with it any actual or implied connection between the termites and their higher neighbours, although, indeed, the likenesses between the social life of the two orders of insects might warrant such a supposition.

The common ants, the study of which in their native haunts is a matter of no great difficulty, and one which will fully reward the seeking mind, possess, like the termites, three grades of individuals. In a single nest of common ants more than one female may be found, the ants differing from the bees in this respect; and in the nests of some species of ants there are apparently 'soldiers' resembling the military termites in the possession of large heads and well-developed jaws. Very amazing differences are to be perceived amongst the various species of ants. Differences in size are of common occurrence, but naturalists have actually succeeded in classifying ants in a general way, by differences in manner and disposition. We know, for example, that the horse-ant (*Formica rufa*) has little individual intelligence, but is extremely socialistic, and moves and acts *en masse*. Another species (*F. fusca*) is timid and retiring. *F. pratensis* is a revengeful creature, since it 'worries' its fallen foes; *F. cinerea* is bold and audacious; others are termed 'thieves' and 'cowards'; some are phlegmatic; and to complete the list of failings and traits which are human enough in character, one species is said to present an invariable greediness as its prevailing characteristic. The common ants resemble the termites in the general details of their life. We see in an ants' nest the same restless activity of the workers, the same earnest attention paid to the young and pupæ, the same instinct in shielding the young from danger, and much the same general routine of development.

Certain rather special, and it may be said extraordinary, habits of ants may, however, demand notice before we attempt a brief survey of their instincts at large. Few readers are unacquainted with the *Aphides*, or plant-lice, those little wingless insects which infest our plants and herbs in myriads in summer. It is a fact now well known to naturalists, and first placed on record by Huber, that between the ants and plant-lice relations of a very friendly and, as far as the ants are concerned, advantageous character have become established. Ants have been observed to stroke the tips of the bodies of the plant-lice with their antennæ, this act causing the plant-lice to exude drops of a clear sweet fluid, of which the ants are extremely enamoured. The ants would thus appear to habitually 'milk' their insect-neighbours, and, as far as observation goes, some ants seem not

merely to keep the plant-lice in their nests so as to form a veritable dairy-establishment, but also to make provision in the future by securing the eggs of the aphides, and bringing up the young as we rear calves.

That the relations between the ants and plant-lice are of very stable kind is proved by the interesting remarks of Mr. Darwin, who 'removed all the ants from a group of about a dozen aphides on a dock-plant, and prevented their attendance during several hours.' Careful watching showed that the plant-lice after this interval did not excrete the sweet fluid. Mr. Darwin then stroked the plant-lice with a hair, endeavouring thus to imitate the action of the ant's feelers, but not a single plant-louse seemed disposed to emit the secretion. Thereafter, a single ant was admitted to their company, the insect, in Mr. Darwin's words, appearing, 'by its eager way of running about, to be well aware what a rich flock it had discovered.' The ant first stroked one aphid, and then another, each insect excreting a drop of the sweet juice 'as soon as it felt the antennæ'; and 'even the quite young aphides behaved in this manner, showing that the action was instinctive, and not the result of experience.' If, as Mr. Darwin remarks, it is a convenience for the aphides to have the sweet secretion removed, and that 'they do not excrete solely for the food of the ants,' the observation does not in any degree lessen the curious nature of the relationship which has become established between the ants and their neighbours, or the interesting features in ant-life which have inaugurated and perpetuated the habit.

Not less remarkable are the 'slave-making' instincts of certain species of ants. It may be safely maintained that the slave-making habit forms a subject of more than ordinary interest not merely to naturalists but to metaphysicians given to speculate on the origin and acquirement of the practices of human existence. Pierre Huber, son of the famous entomologist, was the first to describe the slave-making instinct in a species (*Polyergus rufescens*) noted for its predaceous instincts, and subsequent observations have shown that other species participate in these habits. *Polyergus* is thoroughly dependent on its slaves. Without these bondsmen it is difficult to see how the ants could exist. Huber tells us that the workers of this species perform no work save that of capturing slaves. Use and wont, and the habit of depending entirely on their servitors, have produced such changes in the structure of these ants, that they are unable to help themselves. The jaws of these ants are not adapted for work; they are carried by their slaves from an old nest to a new one; and, more extraordinary still, they require to be fed by their slaves, even with plenty of food close at hand.

Out of thirty of these ants placed by Huber in a box, with some of their larvæ and pupæ and a store of honey, fifteen died in less than two days of hunger, and of sheer inability to help themselves. When, however, one of their slaves was introduced, the willing servitor 'established order, formed a chamber in the earth, gathered together the larvæ, extricated several young ants that were ready to quit the condition of pupæ, and preserved the life of the remaining Amazons.' It must be noted, that there are very varying degrees in the dependence of the ant-masters on their slaves. In the recognition of this graduated scale of relationship and dependence, indeed, will be found the clue to the acquirement of this instinct. The horse-ant (*Formica rufa*) will carry off the larvæ and pupæ of other ants *for food*, and it sometimes happens that some of these captives, spared by their cannibal neighbours, will grow up in the nest of their captors. A well-known ant, the *Formica sanguinea*, found in the south of England, is, however, a true slave-making species, but exhibits no such utter dependence on its servitors as does Polyergus. The slave-making habit is not only typically developed in the Sanguineas, but the relations of the captives to their masters indicate a degree of relationship and organisation such as could hardly be conceived to exist outside human experience. Thus the Sanguineas make periodical excursions, and, like a powerful predatory clan, carry off the *pupæ* or *chrysalides* of a neighbouring species, *F. fusca*. The children of the latter race are actually born within the nests of their captors in an enslaved condition. As slaves 'born and bred,' so to speak, they fall at once into the routine of their duties, assist their masters in the work of the nest, and tend and nurse the young of the family. The slaves, curiously enough, in this instance, are black in colour, whilst the masters are twice the size of the servitors, and are coloured red; and that the slaves are true importations, is proved by the fact that males and females of the slave species are never developed within the nest of the masters, but only within those of their own colonies. The slaves in this latter instance rarely leave the nest, the masters foraging for food, and employing their captives in household work as it were; whilst, when the work of emigration occurs, the masters carry the slaves in their mouths like household goods and chattels, instead of being carried by them, as in the case of Polyergus.

Mr. Darwin gives an interesting account of the different attitudes exhibited by the Sanguineas towards species of ants other than the black race from which their slaves are usually drawn. A few pupæ of the yellow ant (*F. flava*), a courageous and pugnacious little species, were placed within reach of the slave-making Sanguineas. A like chance presented with the pupæ of

their slave-race was eagerly seized, and the chrysalides carried off. The pupæ of the yellow ants, however, were not merely left untouched, but the slave-makers exhibited every symptom of terror and alarm at the sight of the chrysalides of their yellow neighbours. Such an instance demonstrates the existence not merely of perception but also of the memory of past experience, probably of not over-agreeable kind, of encounters with the yellow ants. When, on the contrary, a nest of the slaves is attacked, the Sanguineas are both bold and wary. Mr. Darwin traced a long file of Sanguineas for forty yards backwards to a clump of heath, whence he perceived the last of the invaders marching homewards with a slave pupa in its mouth. Two or three individuals of the attacked and desolate nest were rushing about in wild despair, and 'one,' adds Mr. Darwin, 'was perched motionless, with its own pupa in its mouth, on the top of a spray of heath, an image of despair over its ravaged home.' The picture thus drawn is not the less eloquent because its subject is drawn from lower existence; although the pains and sorrows of ant life may not legitimately be judged by the standard of human woe.

The explanation of the slave-making instinct in ants begins with the recognition of the fact that many ants, not slave-makers, store up pupæ of other species for food. If we suppose that some of the pupæ originally acquired through a cannibal-like instinct came to maturity within the nest of their captors, and in virtue of their own inherited instincts engaged in the work of the hive, we may conceive of a rational beginning of the slave-making instinct. If, further, the captors learned to appreciate the labours of their captives, as lightening their own work, the habit of collecting pupæ as slaves might succeed and supersede that of collecting them for food. In any case, we should require to postulate on the part of the slave-makers a degree of instinct altogether unusual in insects, or, indeed, in higher animals; but that such instinct is developed in ants other than slave-makers admits of no dispute. The strengthening, through repetition, of a habit useful to the species, may thus be credited with the beginning of the practice of slavery amongst ants; whilst special circumstances—such as the number of slaves as compared with the number of masters—would tend to develop a greater or less degree of dependence of the captors or their servitors.

Huber, for instance, informs us that the *Fusca*-slaves of the Sanguineas of Switzerland, work with their masters in building the nest; they close and open the doors of the hive; but their chief office appears to be that of hunting for plant-lice. In England, on the contrary, the slaves are strictly household servants, rarely

venturing out of doors. Such differences depend most probably on the fact that a greater number of slaves occur in Swiss than in English nests, and they may therefore be employed in a wider range of duties on the continent than at home. A fewer number of slaves, a greater aptitude on the part of the slaves for their duties, the inability of the masters to perform the duties of the slaves, each or all of these causes combined, would serve to increase the value of the servitors, and at the same time to reduce the independence of the masters.

This increase of the value of the slaves as active factors in the ant-community might at length proceed to such extremes as we see exemplified in the *Polyergus*, already referred to, a race which has become literally unable to feed itself, and to discharge the simplest duties of ant existence, and whose actual life is entirely spent in marauding expeditions on the nests of its neighbours.

The subject of the general intelligence of ants, and of their ability to adapt themselves to awkward and unusual circumstances, may be briefly touched upon by way of conclusion.

Between the reason and intelligence of higher animals and the 'instinct' of ants there is unquestionably a great gulf fixed. I make this statement unhesitatingly, notwithstanding that I should no more willingly attempt to define 'instinct' than to give an exact definition of 'insanity'. In the latter case one may make the definition so limited, as practically to exclude all save one class of cases; or so wide, as to include even the judge on the bench; and in the case of instinct, the rigid definition of one authority might cause us to regard it as the exclusive property of lower forms, having no relationship whatever with the mental powers of higher beings; or, on the other hand, as being but a modified form of, or in some respects identical with, these very powers. We know too little respecting the so-called 'automatic' powers and ways even of higher animals, to dogmatise regarding the acts of lower animals; but we may safely assume that one apparent ground of distinction between instinct and reason may be found in the common incompetence of instinct to move out of the beaten track of existence, and in the adaptation of reason, through the teachings of experience, to new and unwonted circumstances. Let Dr. Carpenter speak as an authority on such a subject. 'The whole nervous system of invertebrated animals, then, may be regarded as ministering entirely to *automatic* action; and its highest development, as in the class of insects, is coincident with the highest manifestations of the "instinctive" powers, which, when carefully examined, are found to consist entirely in movements of the excito-motor and sensori-motor kinds. (The terms "*excito-motor*" and "*sensory-motor*" are

applied to nervous actions resulting in movements of varying kinds, and produced by impressions made on nervous centres, but without any necessary emotion, reason, or consciousness). When we attentively consider the habits of these animals, we find that their actions, though evidently adapted to the attainment of certain ends, are very far from evincing a *designed* adaptation on the part of the beings that perform them. . . . For, in the first place, these actions are invariably performed in the same manner by all the individuals of a species, when the conditions are the same; and thus are obviously to be attributed rather to a uniform impulse than to a free choice, the most remarkable example of this being furnished by the economy of bees, wasps, and other "social" insects, in which every individual of the community performs its appropriated part with the exactitude and method of a perfect machine. The very perfection of the adaptation, again, is often of itself a sufficient evidence of the unreasoning character of the beings which perform the work; for, if we attribute it to their own intelligence, we must admit that this intelligence frequently equals, if it does not surpass, that of the most accomplished Human Reasoner.'

Appealing to the most recent observations on ants we may find evidence of the truth of Dr. Carpenter's statements, whilst at the same time we may also detect instances of the development of higher powers which are hardly to be classed as 'automatic,' and which, in certain species (as in the Ecitons, charmingly described by Mr. Belt in 'The Naturalist in Nicaragua'), may be said to be elevated above the common instincts of the race. The recently published experiments of Sir John Lubbock show that ants under certain circumstances are both stupid and devoid of any intelligent comprehension in the way of surmounting difficulties; but this distinguished observer has also shown that as regards communication between ants, and in the regulation of the ordinary circumstances of their lives, these insects evince a high degree of intelligence, and exhibit instincts of a very highly developed kind. Still, making every allowance for the development of extraordinary mental powers in some species of ants, there can be little doubt of the purely automatic beginnings and nature of most, if not all, of the acts of ordinary ant-existence. The young ant, wasp, or bee, will begin its labours and discharge them as perfectly at the beginning of its existence as a perfect insect, as at the close of life. Here there is no experience, no tuition, no consciousness, no reason, and no powers save such as have been transferred to the insect as a mere matter of heredity and derivation from its ancestors, who lived by an unconscious rule of thumb, so to speak. It is very hard at first to convince oneself, when watching an ants' nest, that intelligence

and consciousness play little or no part in the apparently intelligent operations of these insects. But to assume the contrary would be to maintain that the insect stands on an equal footing with man himself, and for such a supposition there is neither lawful ground nor sympathy. The marvellous instinct of lower life stands on a platform of its own, has its own phases of development, and probably its own unconscious way of progress. The higher reason and intellect of humanity similarly possesses its own peculiar standard, rate, and method of culture; and may even seek and find in the ways of lower existence not merely a lesson in the ordering of human life, but some comfort in the thought that the apparently steady and purposive progress of lower nature is not unknown in the domain of human hopes and aspirations.

ANDREW WILSON.

An Agamist's Holiday.

I.

'ARE you fond of sea-fishing?' said my friend Morton to me, as we strolled along the esplanade at Hastings. 'I have invited four old friends to stay a week with me down here, and I shall be very pleased if you will join us to-morrow. We intend to start early, run out into deep water where we shall be sure of good sport, and return in the evening to a quiet dinner at my house. No petticoats, old boy' (Morton is a confirmed old bachelor); 'so I have no doubt that, weather permitting, we shall have a good time of it. By the by, you will be the only married man of our party—the solitary slave of the ring, for my friends have all been as adverse to matrimony as I; and as they have now arrived at years of discretion—the youngest confesses to be over fifty—they have not much to fear from the wiles of the fair sex.'

Of course I was delighted to accept the invitation, for Morton's generous hospitality and genial humour are proverbial.

'Breakfast with us at nine *sharp*, Williams,' said he; 'I can then introduce you to my friends before we put to sea.'

Next morning I was well up to time, and was presented in due form to Messrs. Knight, Jawson, Kayser, and Jackson; and after a plenteous repast, at which some fine hock (the weather was very sultry) played a prominent part, we drove down to the point from which it had been arranged we should embark.

Now, whether the excellency of the hock or the profundity of Jawson's arguments were to blame, I know not, but certain it is that when we arrived at the beach our bark was high and dry, and its gallant skipper, in a state of morose indignation, informed us that we had missed the tide, and that there would be no fishing for us that day. What was to be done? There were the well-filled hampers, the cases of wine, the boxes of cigars, the peaches and the grapes still in our host's drag. A bright smile suddenly illumined his countenance. 'What think you of a drive to Hurstmonceux? we shall be as quiet there as if we were miles out at sea, without the trouble of pulling out congers and dogfish, and nothing to fear as regards our appetites.'

Our host's suggestion was carried *nem. con.*, and his horses, eager for the road, were soon bearing us merrily along towards our destination.

We conversed as we rode along on the beauty of the scenery and on the topics of the day, when Knight gloomily remarked (we were approaching the castle), 'We shan't run into a school treat there, I hope : a parcel of yelling boys and girls bursting themselves with buns and tea ; I believe I might have been fool enough to have committed myself to matrimony in my inexperienced youth, could I have insured the cause without the effect. Bah ! I *hate* children.'

'Well,' replied Kayser, 'children are a nuisance, but nothing to what the nurses are—stuck-up, impertinent minxes ! driving their perambulators over your toes, and throwing their h's about at random whenever they open their mouths. I shouldn't object to a baby so much, if I could make certain that the little beggar could get on without either a mother or a nurse.'

'Don't mention such a thing,' retorted Jackson, indignantly. 'We're out for a day's pleasure, aren't we ? Why introduce such topics ? The very name of baby is a damper to conviviality.'

'Ah,' said Jawson, 'when we take into consideration the female subject and its ramifications, we must admit—and if you, my friends, will allow me, and if Williams, as a matrimonial victim, will not be offended, I will endeavour, by a few powerful arguments, to prove to you that, when we take into consideration the fallacious position a man places himself in when he contemplates the complicity which must then inevitably occur, our powers of reason must indicate to us——'

'Shut up, Jawson,' shouted Kayser ; 'you're a regular conversation-killer ; if you were to talk for a week, you would never come to the point.'

Jawson, taken by surprise, subsided into himself, murmuring softly, 'But if you *really* take into consideration——' 'Shut up,' again screamed Kayser. 'But I was just coming to the point,' pleaded Jawson. 'I meant to remark that females have always been the cause of dissension, and I will now endeavour to prove to you, by referring to the earliest period of——'

Here, seeing a dangerous gleam in Kayser's eyes, our host gently but firmly interfered. 'My dear Jawson, we all know what you mean to say—we certainly *didn't* stick to the ship this morning, but we *will* stick to each other for the remainder of the day. We are five old bachelors come out to enjoy each other's society ; and as I look upon Williams as a bachelor *pro tem.*, I am sure he will adapt himself to circumstances, while we will endeavour to entertain him to the best of our ability. See ! there the red ruin of Hurstmonceux rises before us—henceforth let us not only be true to our opinions but to each other.'

II.

IN a shady nook, where the ivy clustered on the castle wall, our repast was spread. Everything was perfect: not even the salt was forgotten; and when one of our party (I think it was Jackson, who had architectural proclivities) remarked that the ruin looked something like the remains of a factory that had been burnt down, he was snubbed at once.

We enjoyed our host's lunch more, I imagine, than we should have done had we been tossing about at sea; and as the sparkling wines passed merrily round, everything appeared *couleur de rose*. Even the irruption of two young ladies in charming crewel work dresses drew no frown or argument from Jawson, and I even detected a smile in the eyes of our host as he remarked, 'I rather like those costumes; nice-looking girls, too, aren't they?'

'Yes,' I answered curtly—'very.'

Suddenly a ring of merry laughter burst upon our ears, and the castle court became alive with children of either sex, madly enjoying their freedom and the summer day. More children, nurses and babies, young men and maidens, and yet Knight was actually joking and Jackson laughing!

At last Jawson rose solemnly from his seat. I thought he was going to make a speech, and shuddered—but to my relief he only placed his hand upon a bottle of champagne.

'My dear Morton,' said he, 'I think I have known you long enough to be able to take a liberty. Those young ladies seated behind the arch, there, have evidently forgotten to bring anything to drink with them; and when we take into consideration——'

'All right, my dear fellow,' exclaimed our host; 'I know what you are going to say; take it, by all means.' And away walked Jawson.

An interval of five minutes—our host seemed a little fidgety—at last he too rose. 'I am sure,' he said, 'that you will excuse me for a few moments, but Jawson is such a terrible fellow for an argument, that I am afraid he may drive those young ladies, not only out of the ruins, but out of their minds. I will go and endeavour to rescue them, and—perhaps—as a little excuse for my intrusion, I may as well offer them those grapes and peaches—I suppose you fellows don't care about them, as you are smoking?' and exit our host.

Jackson and Knight smiled at each other—I looked down.

'Ah!' said Kayser. 'Not much fun now *he's* gone. I shall take a stroll round the ruins, and try to discover where the Ladies'

Bower was situated. May as well take a little refreshment with me, though. Shall find you fellows here when I return, I suppose?' and away went Kayser.

Knight looked oppressed with some secret care, as he growled, 'This is not much like sticking to the ship, is it? What are you going to do, Williams?'

'Wait for our host,' I replied.

'Oh!' said he. 'Then I'm afraid you'll have to wait for some time, for I can see that he and Jawson are talking to those girls. I shall get out of this noise—go outside, I think. Find you here, I suppose, when I come back?'

'I, too, feel that I shall be better for a little gentle exercise,' remarked Jackson, as he quietly took his departure.

I sat a short time waiting and watching, the last to desert the ship, of which I suppose our table was allegorical. Then I too rose. 'John,' said I to one of the servants, as I lighted a soothing cigar, 'look after the plate . . . and . . . your master—I am going to investigate the ruins.'

Suddenly turning the corner of one of the old brick walls with which the court is intersected, I came face to face with Knight. Held gently in his arms, its tiny hands crammed full of cakes, lay a little crippled child that I had noticed in the earlier part of the day among the other children. He didn't even look ashamed.

'Poor little darling;' he said, 'she can't get about like the others, so I have been carrying her round the place. All brought on by bad nursing; people don't deserve to have children who can't take care of them.'

At that moment into the same trap tripped Kayser, wheeling a perambulator, a pretty black-eyed nursemaid by his side, on whom he was pressing refreshment. His face was literally beaming, as he alternately flirted with the girl and romped with three rosy-cheeked boys in knickerbockers.

'All bad nursing,' said Knight unabashed, as he held out the little one he was carrying.

'Bosh!' replied Kayser; 'sins of the parents. Susan, my dear,'—turning to the nurse,—'*you* know how to take care of your little charges, don't you? Bad nursing! bad fiddlestick!'

At that instant in a secluded portion of the ruin I caught sight of Jackson. He was indeed taking a little exercise, with a vengeance! Seated by the side of a stout, widow-looking lady with a mauve-trimmed parasol, he was dancing on his knee the very fattest baby I have ever set eyes on.

Well, thought I, I may as well proceed to the bitter end. I had a dark suspicion as to where I should find the other two. On a

piece of broken wall sat the two fascinating crewel girls, and at their feet elegantly reclined Morton and Jawson. I passed very near them, but they heeded me not, neither did I see more of our party till the servants gathered the stray sheep together, and we were rolling on the road to Hastings, a somewhat silent party.

‘Strange!’ whispered Morton to me, as I was washing my hands just before dinner. ‘Only fancy Kayser having ancillarian tastes; and I never had the slightest idea that Knight and Jackson were so fond of children before.’

‘Nor had I,’ I replied, ‘even the slightest suspicion that Jawson’ (of course, politeness compelled me to omit my host’s name) ‘was so interested in *young ladies*.’

‘Ah!’ commenced Jawson, who was standing near. ‘The concatenation of events has been most extraordinary; but if you will only take into consideration the peculiar state of the atmosphere, which has been so highly charged with electricity all the day, I shall no doubt be able to prove to you by a few powerful—’ but at that instant our host’s gong sounded for dinner, and I was saved.

Famous Theatrical Riots.

THESE have not been greater changes behind than before the theatrical curtain during the last fifty years. The audiences of to-day are as different from those which applauded Garrick and Siddons as our own actors are from those great artists. The stage has not only declined artistically, but in public estimation. Formerly, in London at least, it was a fourth estate—a necessity of civilised man; that was before the days of circulating libraries, of novel-reading, concerts, picture galleries, and all the raree shows that now distract the idler and seeker of amusement. In Garrick's time there was no reading public, and newspapers were comparatively non-existent. What men and women knew of history, literature, poetry, was all derived orally from the stage, which then taught as well as amused.

Going back to the time of Charles the Second, we find his Majesty personally regulating the affairs of the theatre, and playing the part of umpire in all its disputes. In the next century the audiences took this position upon themselves, and exercised a capricious tyranny over managers and actors that frequently led to serious disturbances. Sometimes the fine gentlemen would make the theatre the scene of their private brawls, and in the midst of a performance spring upon the stage and fall to at cut and thrust with sometimes fatal effect. One night, in 1679, some tipsy gallants, enemies of the Duchess of Portsmouth, endeavoured to set fire to the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, because that notorious woman was seated in the boxes. A more serious disturbance, however, occurred at that house in 1721. In one of the principal scenes of 'Macheth' a nobleman deliberately crossed the stage in front of the performers to speak with a friend who was on the opposite side. Rich, the manager, was so indignant that he forbade him henceforth the *entrée* to the stage. The answer of my lord was a blow in the face. Rich drew his sword, and his actors supported him; my lord's friends did likewise, and a fierce scuffle ensued, which ended in the gallants being driven out of the theatre. But reinforced in numbers they soon returned, forced their way in, smashed the mirrors and mouldings, and hurled lighted torches among the scenery. The military were summoned, and after some trouble the rioters were captured. But the

theatre was closed for a week by command, and thereafter a guard was ordered to attend as a precaution against the recurrence of such scenes.

Patriotism ran high in the old days, and foreigners, more especially the French, were John Bull's *bêtes noires*. In 1754, just after war had broken out between France and England, Garrick brought out a splendid ballet pantomime, with French dancers, whom he had engaged at great expense. British indignation boiled over. There was a riot in the pit on the first night; the boxes took part with the dancers; gentlemen, incited by the ladies, drew their swords, and leaped down among the rioters; a scene of direct confusion ensued, but the pittites gained the victory, drove their opponents out of the theatre, destroyed everything breakable, then marched in a body to Garrick's house in Southampton Street, Strand, and smashed all his windows. When he next appeared upon the stage there were loud cries for an apology, which he courageously refused to make, and informed the audience in firm but respectful terms that if they were dissatisfied with his conduct he would quit the stage for ever. This threat speedily quelled the disturbance.

With all his immense popularity, this was not the first time he had been the victim of such tumults. Several years previously he had been nearly driven from the stage by the intrigues of Macklin. Fleetwood, the manager of Drury Lane, had fallen so deeply in arrears with his company that there was a general revolt; all the actors pledged themselves to stand or fall together. After a time Fleetwood came to an arrangement, but made Macklin the scapegoat, and refused to re-engage him. Garrick offered to procure an engagement both for himself and his wife, and make up any deficiency of salary out of his own pocket. But Macklin considered himself betrayed, and would listen only to the dictates of revenge. He went about everywhere proclaiming his wrongs, and soon organised a clique which on the first night of Garrick's re-appearance saluted him with groans, hisses, and showers of rotten eggs, apples, and other missiles, until the curtain had to be dropped and the audience dismissed. The next night Fleetwood brought into the pit a small army of roughs and prize-fighters. The moment the disturbances commenced, Broughton, a noted member of the fancy, jumped up on his seat: 'Gentlemen,' he shouted, 'I'm told some people have come here to interrupt the play; now, I've paid my money to hear it, and I advise them to go away quietly and not hinder my diversion.' This address was received with a howl of defiance that declared the rioters were not to be intimidated, upon which the pugilists struck out right and left. In an instant

there was a scene of the wildest confusion : seats were overturned, hats and wigs were flying about in all directions, heads and noses were broken, women were shrieking. But the battle rested with the roughs, who cleared the pit of their opponents, and then sat down to enjoy the play. A few years afterwards Macklin was himself the victim of a similar combination, which was more successful in his case, for the audience would not allow the performance to proceed until the manager had assured them he was discharged.

Managers in those days had to keep faith with their patrons or take the consequences. Our ancestors had a strong objection to be swindled, and punished the attempt with Lynch law. In 1749 a man was advertised to appear at the Haymarket and put himself into a quart bottle. The hoax was so transparent that one can scarcely understand how it could have imposed upon the most credulous, but there is no limit to the gullibility of the British public ; the house was crammed to the ceiling. The time announced for the wonderful performance arrived, but not the performer ; the gulls became impatient ; when presently a man stepped forward and apologetically informed them that the bottle-conjuror was unable to appear that night, but if they would come again the next he would undertake to squeeze himself into a pint instead of a quart bottle. There was an audacity in all this that was positively diverting, but the gulls did not see the joke. The Duke of Cumberland, who was present, was among the most furious. Jumping up in his box, he drew his sword, and called upon the people to destroy the house ; they were nothing loath to obey the princely mandate, and, smashing up the seats and tearing down the decorations, scenes, and curtain, they dragged the wreckage into the street, piled it into a heap, and set fire to it. The hoax was said to have been contrived by the Duke of Montague.

But it must not be supposed that theatrical rioting was an exclusive privilege of the aristocracy. Any offence offered to public prejudices or to the feelings of a particular class of the community was sure to evoke a disturbance. When the new licensing act was passed in 1737, which brought all plays under the censorship of the Lord Chamberlain, theatre-goers were very indignant, and systematically hissed all new plays that had been licensed ; but their wrath was most violently vented upon a company of French dancers who appeared about this time at the Haymarket, and whom in a fury of patriotism they drove from the stage. A curious riot took place at Drury Lane in 1765, just after the death of the Duke of Cumberland, to resent the affront to royalty of a number of persons appearing there without mourning.

One of the pests of the old theatre was the gentleman's footman. He occupied his master's seat in the boxes until he chose to appear, and spat and threw orange peel upon the heads of the people in the pit, and exaggerated all my lord's ill-breeding. These fellows were admitted gratis to the upper gallery, which was set apart for their use, and was the noisiest part of the house; at length their riots became so unbearable that the privilege was withdrawn, and the doors closed against them. The next night they assembled in large numbers, forced their way in, and, notwithstanding the presence of the Prince of Wales, proceeded to the most violent extremes. The rest of the audience, who hated them heartily for their insolent airs, took part with the authorities, a battle royal ensued, in which the Jeameses got the worst of it, and eighteen of their number were sent to prison. That famous satire upon their order, 'High Life Below Stairs,' greatly excited their indignation, and they assembled each night to hiss it.

Our old theatrical audiences were not content with exercising a censorship over the public vocation of their favourites, but considered they had a right to pass judgment and execute punishment upon any private delinquencies. Mrs. Siddons became very unpopular in Dublin through refusing to play for the benefit of an old and much-respected actor, West Digges, who was broken down by paralysis. This story, together with others of her meanness, avarice, and uncharitableness, was brought across the Channel, and the public determined to make a very strong comment upon it. Her first appearance that season was in the character of Mrs. Beverley, in 'The Gamester,' and the moment she stepped before the footlights she was greeted with a shower of groans and hisses; the audience would not hear her speak one word, and John Kemble was at length obliged to lead her off the stage in a fainting condition, and the curtain was dropped. After being a little restored, Sheridan prevailed upon her to again appear. She did so, and to her intense astonishment was received in such profound silence that, to use her own words, she was absolutely awe-struck. Courageously she advanced to the footlights. 'The kind and flattering partiality,' she said, addressing the house in a carefully-prepared speech, 'which I have uniformly experienced in this place would make the present interruption distressing to me indeed were I conscious of having deserved your censure. The stories that have been circulated against me are calumnies. When they shall be proved to be true my aspersers will be justified; but till then my respect for the public leads me to be confident that I shall be protected from unmerited insult.' The effect of this artful speech was a thundering round of applause; and although

some of the newspapers continued the attack, she received no further annoyance from the audience.

Poor Kean may be said to have been destroyed by the moral vengeance of the audience. I allude to the affair with Alderman Cox, in which he was more sinned against than sinning, although the public did not, at least at the time, hold that opinion. The story of that old scandal is now little remembered, and its recapitulation may not prove uninteresting. While he was playing Othello in Taunton, in 1818, a lady was observed to faint away in a stage box; this was by no means an uncommon incident during Kean's wonderful performances. Lord Byron had fallen into a convulsive fit, and Mrs. Glover had swooned upon the stage during his last scene of Sir Giles Overreach. The lady in question was conveyed behind the scenes into the green-room, and Kean showed her great attention. She proved to be the wife of a London alderman, named Cox, who was staying in the town for a time. Kean was invited to their hotel, and afterwards to their house in London. This was the commencement of an unfortunate intimacy. It would appear that the lady's previous conduct had not been altogether immaculate, that the passion began at least on her side, and if Kean was not a Joseph, she was something of a Mrs. Potiphar; the husband was strangely confiding, allowed her to visit Kean in his dressing-room, and when he was bankrupt accepted money from him for his necessities. At last, by some strange negligence, purposed or accidental, a packet of letters was found, and thereupon an action of *crim. con.* commenced, the result of which was an award of 800*l.* to the injured (?) husband. The press denounced Kean in the most ferocious terms, and called upon the public to drive him from the stage; the public, with that love of hunting down anyone or anything in misfortune which is inherent to human nature, was not slow to respond to the appeal. The audience that once hung breathlessly upon his lips, and greeted him with shouts of acclamation, now howled and hissed, and would not have him. Night after night the theatre was crammed to the ceiling, but the performance was carried on only in dumb show. Yet, dauntless as ever, he gave his enemies scorn for scorn, insult for insult. Such a contest, however, could end only in his discomfiture; friends and patrons fell from him, wife and child left him. It was the deathblow to his fame and to his life. Barry Cornwall, in his 'Life of Kean,' gives us a sad picture of him at this period.

'I called upon him in London soon after the business (the trial) had subsided, and when he was on the point of his exile to America. I never saw a man so changed; he had all the air of desperation about him. He looked bloated with rage and brandy;

his nose was red, his eyes were bloodshot ; I really pitied him. He had lodgings in Regent Street ; but I believe very few of his former friends of any respectability noticed him. The day I saw him he sat down to the piano, notwithstanding the agitated state of his mind, and sang for me ' Lord Ullin's Daughter ' with a depth and power and sweetness that quite electrified me. I could not repress a deep sentiment of sorrow at the wreck he presented of genius, fame, and wealth. At this period I believe he had not one hundred pounds left of the many thousands he had received. His mind seemed shattered ; he was an outcast on the world. He left England a few days afterwards, and I never dreamt of seeing him again.'

In America another storm burst upon him. During his first visit he played two engagements at Boston ; the first was highly successful—the second, being out of the season, was a failure ; one night, there being only twenty people in the house, he refused to play, and left the town. The dignity of the Bostonians was outraged, and upon his return they resolved to take vengeance for what they were pleased to consider an affront. His appearance upon the stage was the signal for a terrible riot ; missiles of all kinds, bottles, and brass balls made for the purpose, were hurled at him ; he had to fly for his life ; then the mob invaded the stage, sought for him in the dressing-rooms, and not finding him there surrounded the hotel at which he was staying, and demanded that he should be given up to their fury, openly declaring their intention of killing him. I was with much difficulty he succeeded in effecting his escape.

The riots in American theatres are, or were, of a far more dangerous character than in our own. The worst and most disgraceful that ever happened in the States were those organised against Macready by the partisans of Forrest, during his visit to New York in 1849. It was reported that he had shown hostility towards and hissed the Yankee favourite during the latter's stay in England. The report was utterly false, but a clique took advantage of it to damn the English actor. Upon Macready's appearance as Macbeth, on May 7th, he was greeted with what seemed to him at first a very extraordinary enthusiasm, but which he by-and-by began to perceive was only a counter demonstration to the howls and shrieks of another part of the audience. ' They would not let me speak,' he says ; ' they hung out placards—" You have been proved a liar," &c., flung a rotten egg close to me. I pointed it to the audience, and smiled with contempt, persisting in my endeavour to be heard. I could not have been less than a quarter of an hour on the stage altogether, with perfect *sangfroid* and good humour, reposing in the consciousness of my own truth. At last there was nothing for

it, and I said 'Go on,' and the play proceeded in dumb show, I hurrying the players on. Copper cents were thrown—some struck me, four or five eggs, a great many apples, nearly if not quite a peck of potatoes, lemons, pieces of wood, a bottle of assafoetida, which splashed my own dress, smelling of course most horribly.' He bore these brutalities manfully through the first two acts, but at the opening of the third they began to throw chairs, upon which he retired, undressed, and refused to go on again.

The whole affair was a clique, and I have been told, by a gentleman who was travelling with Macready at the time, that he was offered a large bribe to come forward and swear falsely that Macready had hissed Forrest. All the better-class opinion of New York was with the injured man; but alas, rowdyism was then, as now, omnipotent. In London we would not be overawed by Whitechapel and the Seven Dials, but in New York it seems they cannot help it. Emboldened by the sympathy he received, he appeared again on May 10. The clique soon made themselves heard, but the management was prepared for it, and at a given signal the police 'closed in upon the scoundrels occupying the centre seats, and furiously vociferating and gesticulating, and seemed to lift them or bundle them in a body out of the centre of the house, amid the cheers of the audience. . . . As well as I can remember, the bombardment outside now began. Stones were hurled against the windows in Eighth Street, smashing many; the work of destruction then became more systematic; the volleys of stones flew without intermission, battering and smashing all before them; the gallery and upper gallery still kept up the din within, aided by the crashing of glass and boarding without. The second act passed, the noise and violence without increasing, the contest within becoming feeble.' A timid friend advised him to bring the performance to a close, but he would not listen to the suggestion. During the fourth act stones were hurled through the windows and struck the chandelier; the audience hurried from their seats, and huddled against the walls. Into the fifth act, he says, he threw his whole soul, 'exciting the audience to a sympathy even with the glowing words of fiction, whilst those dreadful deeds of real crime and outrage were roaring at intervals in our ears and rising to madness all around us.' The death scene was loudly cheered, and he was called before the curtain amidst loud acclamations. While he was dressing, people came into his room full of consternation. The military were called out, were drawn up in the Bowery; the mob were getting stronger. 'Suddenly we heard a volley of musketry. "Hark! what's that?" I asked. "The

soldiers have fired!" "My God!" I exclaimed. Another volley, and another. . . . News came that several were killed; I was really insensible to the degree of danger in which I stood, and saw at once, there being no avoidance, there was nothing for it but to meet the worst with dignity, and so I stood prepared.' His friends urged the necessity of disguise, and he changed clothes with one of the performers, went down into the orchestra, got over into the parquet, and mixed with the stream of the audience who were leaving the theatre. Threading the excited crowd without, he was conducted to the house of a friend where he was to sleep. But soon came another friend to report that several men had been killed, and he must get away out of the city at once; a carriage was ordered to be at the door at four o'clock in the morning, to take a doctor to some gentleman's house near New Rochelle. During the night such comforting scraps of intelligence were brought in as—a crowd was seen pursuing an omnibus, which the pursuers protested contained Macready; 'they've killed twenty of us, and by God we'll kill him' was their cry. 'The clock struck four; we were all on the move. All was still in the dawn of morning, but we waited some ten minutes, an age of suspense; the carriage arrived, I shook the hand of my preserver and friend, my heart responded to the prayer of "God bless him!" and stepping into the carriage, a covered phaeton, we turned up Fifth Avenue, and were on our way to safety.' In the following month of September ten of the Aston Place rioters were tried at the Court of General Sessions, New York, and after a fifteen days' trial were all convicted. The sentences varied from one month's imprisonment to one year's, with a fine of two hundred and fifty dollars.

Such was the end of the most serious and disgraceful riot in stage annals. The drollest disturbance that ever took place within the walls of a theatre happened at the Haymarket in 1805. Years previously Foote had produced at that house a burlesque piece, the author of which was never known, entitled 'The Tailors, or a Tragedy for Warm Weather.' The satire of the piece gave great umbrage to the craft after which it was called. In the year above named Dowton announced its revival for his benefit. The bills were scarcely issued when he received a letter requesting him to change the play, as it was highly offensive to the trade, and promising if he would do so he should be assured of a full house. Dowton took no notice of this communication, upon which the knights of the needle waxed wroth, called a meeting, and swore they would oppose him with might and main. Menacing epistles now poured in upon him, in which he was informed that seventeen thousand tailors would attend the theatre to hoot down the

play. One who signed himself 'Death' wrote to the proprietors to say that ten thousand more could be mustered if necessary. Dowton laughed at these threats, and persisted in his programme. But when the night came he soon discovered they were not idle ones. The brotherhood had contrived to monopolise not only every seat in the gallery save two, but to fill every other part of the house. Dowton's appearance was the signal for the uproar to begin; a pair of shears was thrown at him; he offered twenty pounds to any person who would point out the man who threw them. His offer was received with a yell and a shower of other missiles. Not a word would the audience listen to; in vain did he now offer to change the piece to 'The Village Lawyer;' they would accept no compromise, and the uproar within was echoed by a crowd without who could not gain admittance. The riot now became so violent that it was necessary to send for a magistrate and a force of constables; these were powerless against the immense number of the rioters. This victory over the law rendered them more daring and furious than ever; fears began to be entertained for the safety of the building and the lives of the actors. A troop of Life Guards was sent for; this quickly settled the matter; there was a general stampede, but not before sixteen had been captured in their flight.

The claims of rival actors and actresses have often been the occasion of serious disturbances. Of such were the Giroux riots, which broke out at the Surrey in 1810, when that theatre was under the management of Elliston. Miss Giroux, a favourite dancer, considered herself aggrieved by the engagement of a Miss Taylor, a rival Terpsichore. The two ladies, ventilating their real or imaginary wrongs abroad, soon secured to themselves bodies of partisans, and the appearance of either upon the stage was the signal for mingled cheers, groans, applause, and howls from enemies and supporters. When Elliston attempted to address the audience he was hissed and pelted off the stage. Night after night the disturbances were carried on. Two public-houses in the neighbourhood altered their signs to 'The Giroux' and 'The Taylor,' and became the rendezvous of the two factions, between which desperate battles were frequently fought; crowds waited nightly at the stage door to hiss and cheer the ladies as they entered; a song entitled 'The Rival Queens' was composed and sung at the Obelisk in Blackfriars Road; the more ardent partisans wore the letters G. or T. in their hats, in imitation of the O.P. rioters. As the house was crammed each night by the angry partisans, the manager did not trouble his head to interfere much with their amusement, until he found the authorities were about to seriously interpose. Then

he published a notice that on a certain night he would himself adjudge the cause. The night came, and Robert William was suffering under a complaint to which he was rather subject—wine-fever. Walking upon the stage with portentous dignity, he turned to the prompter, and in a majestic tone said, ‘Bring me a chair.’ The effect was comical in the extreme; the audience burst into a roar of laughter, but they would have none of his judgment, and his voice was drowned in groans and hisses. Ultimately the affair was carried to Westminster, and the ringleaders of the riot convicted. But it was compromised by their giving a sum of money to a charity, Elliston generously refusing all compensation for the injury done to his property.

For the length of time they were carried on, for the diversity of their incidents and their general popularity, all theatrical riots, however, sink into insignificance when compared with the famous ‘O.P.’

When Covent Garden Theatre was rebuilt after the fire of 1808, several alterations were made in the arrangements of the new house that greatly displeased playgoers. The galleries were too high, a third tier of boxes with ante-rooms opening into a saloon were let for twelve thousand pounds, the box price was raised from six to seven shillings, the pit from three-and-sixpence to four shillings. The newspapers grew virtuously indignant upon the private boxes, and were filled with letters, advertisements, and paragraphs calling upon the town to resist the changes. British patriotism was further aroused by the announcement that Madame Catalani had been engaged at an enormous salary, to meet which it was reported the prices had been raised. The new theatre opened on September 18, 1809, with ‘Macbeth’ and the musical farce of ‘The Quaker.’ Many suspicious-looking fellows in big coats and carrying thick sticks were observed scattered among the audience, but the overture was played without a murmur, and at the first bar of ‘God Save the King’ every hat was raised, and all joined in chorus. Then stepped forth Kemble to recite the opening address, and then burst forth the storm—the howls and barking of dogs, the screeching of cat-calls, and cries of ‘Off, off! old prices!’ Not one word of the address was heard, and not one word of the play; every actor was hooted, Kemble and Mrs. Siddons more than the rest. No better fortune attended the farce, although Munden was playing the principal part. Two magistrates read the Riot Act from the stage, constables made raids upon the gallery, the soldiers were called in, but all was useless; even after the curtain fell the rioters would not leave the house, but continued to howl for old prices.

The next morning the 'Times' said 'it was a noblesight to see so much just indignation in the public mind.' The clubs were of the same opinion. Then came a shower of squibs, satires, caricatures: a dictionary of Kemble's oddities of pronunciation—*aitches* for aches, *varetue* for virtue, *hijus* for hideous, *bird* for beard, etc. Each night the riot became more systematic; the actors were assured that no offence was meant to them; placards were hoisted which ran 'Old prices! Opposition, persevere, and you must succeed. John Bull against John Kemble. No foreigners to tax us; no Catalani; native talent,' &c.

On the third night Kemble came forward after the farce, in answer to vehement calls, and asked what they wanted. This naïve question was received with a storm of indignation, amidst which he retired. The whole performance, which had been conducted in dumb show, was over by a little after nine o'clock. Pugilists were now employed against the disturbers, and once, when the pit threatened to invade the stage, all the trap doors were suddenly opened; raids were made by the constables, and several people were arrested and taken before the Bow Street magistrates. But the hisses, groans, cat-calls, and bugle-playing went on more furiously than ever, and nearly every newspaper was teeming with pasquinades. One, which appeared in the 'Morning Chronicle,' September 22, 1809, contains as much point as any of them:—

'THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT.

'This is the house that Jack built.

'These are the *boxes* let to the *great* that visit the house that Jack built.

'These are the *pigeon-holes* over the *boxes* let to the *great* that visit the house that Jack built.

'This is the *cat* engaged to squall to the *poor* in the *pigeon-holes* over the *boxes* let to the *great* that visit the house that Jack built.

'This is John Bull with a *bugle-horn* that hissed the *cat* engaged to squall to the *poor* in the *pigeon-holes* over the *boxes* let to the *great* that visit the house that Jack built.

'This is the thief-taker all shaven and shorn that took up John Bull with his *bugle-horn* who hissed the *cat* engaged to squall to the *poor* in the *pigeon-holes* over the *boxes* let to the *great* that visit the house that Jack built.

'This is the manager full of scorn who raised the price to the people forlorn and directed the thief-taker shaven and shorn to take up John Bull with his *bugle-horn* who hissed the *cat* engaged to

squall to the *poor* in the *pigeon-holes* over the *boxes* let to the *great* that visit the house that Jack built.'

Kemble proposed that the dispute should be submitted to a committee of gentlemen, but he found no supporter. On the sixth night of the disturbances, however, he came forward to announce that a committee had been appointed to inspect the accounts, and that until their report was ready the theatre would be closed. He also announced that Madame Catalani had resigned her engagement. He then retired amidst loud applause; upon which, up went a placard with a coffin and cross-bones upon it, and the words, 'Here lies the body of *New Prices*, who died September 23, 1808, age 6 days.'

John Bull has gained one point, that's flat,
For Kemble has *whipt* out the *cat*,
Shut up his house and gone to bed,
With fewer *itches* in his head,

ran one of the squibs.

When the report was issued it was shown that the profits during the last six years had amounted yearly to only 6½ per cent upon the capital, and that the proprietors had sustained a heavy loss from the late fire in consequence of the property being only partially insured. The receipts during the six years had been 365,983*l.*, the expenditure 307,912*l.*, and there were twelve sharers in the patent. This statement ought to have satisfied the public, especially as it was prepared by men of such unimpeachable veracity as the Solicitor-General, the Recorder of the City of London, and the Governor of the Bank of England. But when the house reopened on the 10th of October the disturbances were worse than ever. Placards were stuck up with 'You don't hoax us,' 'No garbled extracts to humbug John Bull,' &c. Pigeons were let loose from the boxes to show that the people were 'not to be pigeoned.' The rioters wore the letters O.P. on their hats and waistcoats, rang dustmen's bells, sprung watchmen's rattles, blew coachmen's horns, and got up a kind of Carmagnole dance—an alternate stamp and cry of O.P. Ladies wore O.P. medals. Constables armed with bludgeons were brought from Bow Street; bruisers were sent into the pit; free fights and broken heads were indulged in nightly, but they could not even check the rioters. A large sum of money, upwards of four hundred pounds, was collected to support them. Soldiers had to guard Kemble's house in Great Russell Street (afterwards pulled down for the enlargement of the British Museum), from the mob who nightly sang derisive songs under his windows. A Mr. Clifford who had been apprehended by Brandon, the box-keeper, as a rioter, commenced an action against the latter, and of course won it. Crowds

outside that could not gain admission to the court waited for the verdict, and received it with tremendous cheers. A dinner was given at the 'Crown and Anchor' Tavern to about three hundred people, Mr. Clifford being in the chair, and a committee was formed to raise subscriptions to defend all persons under prosecution for rioting. Suddenly a message was brought up that Kemble requested to be admitted to the meeting. He and his partners had taken counsel together, and decided that further resistance was impracticable, and he had come to announce the decision they had arrived at, which was that the boxes should remain at seven shillings, the pit be lowered to the old price (three-and-sixpence), the obnoxious tier of boxes be thrown open to the public, and all prosecutions terminated.

From the tavern Kemble proceeded to the theatre, where the usual riot was in full progress, and strode upon the stage attired as he came out of the street. It was half an hour before he could obtain a hearing to acquaint the house with the treaty he had made. Instead of being satisfied, his exit was attended with shouts of 'Dismiss Brandon!' In vain did he bring the unfortunate box-keeper—whose only crime had been a zealous performance of his duty—forward to read an apology; oranges and sticks were thrown at him, the mob would not abate one jot of their demands, and on the following night Kemble was compelled to announce that Brandon was dismissed, and to offer an apology for all past offences. This was received with cheers and thunders of applause, and the hoisting of a placard upon which was written, 'We are satisfied.'

Thus, after enduring sixty-one nights, ended these famous or rather infamous riots. People are still living who might have joined in them, and yet such a state of manners seems as far removed from us as though it was of centuries back. The theatrical riot is a thing of the past—so much the better; but so is all real, hearty, earnest sympathy with the drama. Indifferentism is the fashion of the day. The stalls have been raised in most West-end theatres from seven to ten shillings; the fact provoked a little discussion a few years back, but people were ready to show that 'the swells' actually preferred the latter to the former price—if they had objected to it, they would have stayed away without a murmur. Audiences have not the courage to hiss bad pieces or bad actors, but will tolerate and even applaud performances that their grandfathers would not have endured for a single night. Art cannot flourish under such laxity; if the buyer is indifferent about the article he purchases, depend upon it the seller will not trouble his head about the quality. If some of the inane rubbish which is presented for the amusement

of playgoers, and a few of the impudent impostors who come forward as actors and actresses, were well hissed, the condition of the dramatic art would be vastly improved; but Sir Charles Coldstream is rapidly becoming the type that is to supersede the top-booted, plethoric individual who formerly represented the English nation.

H. BARTON BAKER.

The Return of the Native.

BY THOMAS HARDY.

BOOK FIFTH.

Contains the natural effects of the foregoing misadventure, namely: Contrition in one quarter; in another, an awakening to harrowing discoveries; hasty action thereupon; and what ensued before milder intentions could take effect.

CHAPTER I.

‘WHEREFORE IS LIGHT GIVEN TO HIM THAT IS IN MISERY?’

ONE evening, about three weeks after the funeral of Mrs. Yeobright, when the silver face of the moon sent a bundle of beams directly upon the door of Clym's house at Alderworth, a woman came forth from within. She reclined over the garden-gate as if to refresh herself awhile. The pale lunar touches which make beauties of hags, lent divinity to this face, already beautiful.

She had not long been there when a man came up the road, and with some hesitation said to her, ‘How is he to-night, ma'am, if you please?’

‘He is better, though still very unwell, Humphrey,’ replied Eustacia.

‘Is he light-headed, ma'am?’

‘No. He is quite sensible now.’

‘Do he rave about his mother just the same, poor fellow?’ continued Humphrey.

‘Just as much, though not quite so wildly,’ she said in a low voice.

‘It was very unfortunate that the boy Johnny should ever have told him his mother's dying words, about her being broken-hearted and cast off by her son. 'Twas enough to upset any man alive.’

Eustacia made no reply beyond that of a slight catch in her breath, as of one who fain would speak but could not; and Humphrey, finding that she was disinclined to say more, went homeward again.

Eustacia turned, entered the house, and ascended to the front bedroom, where a shaded light was burning. In the bed lay Clym, pale, haggard, wide awake, tossing to one side and to the other, his eyes lit by a hot light, as if the fire in their pupils were burning up their substance.



'He brought the tray to the front of the couch.'

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'Is it you, Eustacia?' he said, as she sat down.

'Yes, Clym. I have been down to the gate. The moon is shining beautifully, and there is not a leaf stirring.'

'Shining, is it?—What's the moon to a man like me? Let it shine—let anything be, so that I never see another day. . . . Eustacia, I don't know where to look: my thoughts go through me like swords. Oh, if any man wants to make himself immortal by painting a picture of wretchedness, let him come here!'

'Why do you say so?'

'I cannot help feeling still that I did my best to kill her.'

'No, Clym.'

'Yes, it was so: it is useless to excuse me. My conduct to her was too hideous—I made no advances; and she could not bring herself to forgive me. Now she is dead! If I had only shown myself willing to make it up with her sooner, and we had been friends, and then she had died, it wouldn't be so hard to bear. But I never went near her house, so she never came near mine, and didn't know how welcome she would have been—that's what troubles me. She did not know I was going to her house that very night, for she was too insensible to understand me. If she had only come to see me!—I longed that she would. But it was not to be.'

There escaped from Eustacia one of those shivering sighs which used to shake her like a pestilent blast. She had not yet told.

But Yeobright was too deeply absorbed in the ramblings incidental to his remorseful state to notice her. During his illness he had been continually talking thus. Despair had been added to his original grief by the unfortunate disclosure of the boy who had received the last words of Mrs. Yeobright—words too bitterly uttered in an hour of misapprehension. Then his distress had overwhelmed him, and he longed for death as a field-labourer longs for the shade. It was the pitiful sight of a man standing in the very focus of sorrow. He continually bewailed his tardy journey to his mother's house, because it was an error which could never be rectified, and insisted that he must have been horribly perverted by some fiend, not to have thought before that it was his duty to go to her, since she did not come to him. He would ask Eustacia to agree with him in his self-condemnation; and when she, seared inwardly by a secret she dared not tell, declared that she could not give an opinion, he would say, 'That's because you didn't know my mother's nature. She was always ready to forgive if asked to do so; but I seemed to her to be as an obstinate child, and that made her unyielding. Yet not unyielding: she was proud and reserved, no more. . . . Yes, I can understand

why she held out against me so long. She was waiting for me. I dare say she said a hundred times in her sorrow, "What a return he makes for all the sacrifices I have made for him!" I never went to her! When I set out to visit her it was too late. To think of that is nearly intolerable!

Sometimes his condition had been one of utter remorse, unsoftened by a single tear of pure sorrow; and then he writhed as he lay, fevered far more by thought than by physical ills. 'If I could only get one assurance that she did not die in a belief that I was resentful,' he said one day when in this mood, 'it would be better to think of than a hope of heaven. But that I cannot do.'

'You give yourself up too much to this wearying despair,' said Eustacia. 'Other men's mothers have died.'

'That doesn't make the loss of mine less. Yet it is less the loss than the circumstances of the loss. I sinned against her, and on that account there is no light for me.'

'She sinned against you, I think.'

'No: she did not. I committed the guilt; and may the whole burden be upon my head!'

'I think you might consider twice before you say that,' Eustacia replied. 'Single men have, no doubt, a right to curse themselves as much as they please; but men with wives involve two in the doom they pray down.'

'I am in too sorry a state to understand what you are refining on,' said the wretched man. 'Day and night shout at me, "You have helped to kill her." But in loathing myself I may, I own, be unjust to you, my poor wife. Forgive me for it, Eustacia; for I scarcely know what I do.'

Eustacia was always anxious to avoid the sight of her husband in such a state as this, which had become as dreadful to her as the trial-scene was to Judas Iscariot. It brought before her eyes the spectre of a worn-out woman knocking at a door which she would not open; and she shrank from contemplating it. Yet it was better for Yeobright himself when he spoke openly of his sharp regret, for in silence he endured infinitely more, and would sometimes remain so long in a tense, brooding mood, consuming himself by the gnawing of his thought, that it was imperatively necessary to make him talk aloud, that his grief might in some degree expend itself in the effort.

Eustacia had not long been in-doors after her look at the moonlight, when a soft footstep came up to the house, and Thomasin was announced by the woman downstairs.

'Ah, Thomasin! Thank you for coming to-night,' said Clym when she entered the room. 'Here am I, you see. Such a

wretched spectacle am I, that I shrink from being seen by a single friend; and almost from you.'

'You must not shrink from me, dear Clym,' said Thomasin earnestly, in that sweet voice of hers which came to a sufferer like fresh air into a Black Hole. 'Nothing in you can ever shock me or drive me away. I have been here before, but you don't remember it.'

'Yes, I do. I am not delirious, Thomasin, nor have I been so at all. Don't you believe that if they say so. I am only in great misery at what I have done; and that, with the weakness, makes me seem mad. But it has not upset my reason. Do you think I should remember all about my mother's death if I were out of my mind? No such good luck.—Two months and a half, Thomasin, the last of her life, did my poor mother live alone, distracted and mourning because of me; yet she was unvisited by me, though I was living only five miles off. Two months and a half—seventy-five days did the sun rise and set upon her in that deserted state which a dog didn't deserve. Poor people, who had nothing in common with her, would have cared for her and visited her had they known her sickness and loneliness; but I, who should have been all to her, stayed away like a cur. If there is any justice in God, let Him kill me now. He has nearly blinded me, but that is not enough. If He would only strike me with more pain, I would believe in Him for ever.'

'Hush, hush! O pray, Clym, don't, don't say it!' implored Thomasin, affrighted into sobs and tears; while Eustacia at the other side of the room, though her pale face remained calm, writhed in her chair. Clym went on without heeding his cousin.

'But I am not worth receiving further proof even of Heaven's reprobation. Do you think, Thomasin, that she knew me—that she did not die in that horrid mistaken notion about my not forgiving her, which I can't tell you how she acquired? If you could only assure me of that! Do you think so, Eustacia? Do speak to me.'

'I think I can assure you that she 'knew better at last,' said Thomasin. The pallid Eustacia said nothing.

'Why didn't she come to my house? I would have taken her in, and showed her how I loved her in spite of all. But she never came; and I didn't go to her, and she died on the heath like an animal kicked out, nobody to help her till it was too late. If you could have seen her, Thomasin, as I saw her—a poor dying woman, lying in the dark upon the bare ground, moaning, nobody near, believing she was utterly deserted by all the world—it would have moved you to anguish, it would have moved a brute. And this

poor woman, my mother! No wonder she said to the child, "You have seen a broken-hearted woman." What a state she must have been brought to, to say that! and who can have done it but I? It is too dreadful to think of, and I wish I could be punished more heavily than I am.—How long was I what they called out of my senses?'

'A week, I think.'

'And then I became calm?'

'Yes, for four days.'

'And now I have left off being calm?'

'But try to be quiet: please do, and you will soon be strong. If you could remove that impression from your mind——'

'Yes, yes,' he said impatiently. 'But I don't want to get strong. What's the use of my getting well? It would be better for me if I die, and it would certainly be better for Eustacia. Is Eustacia there?'

'Yes.'

'It would be better for you, Eustacia, if I were to die?'

'Don't press such a question, dear Clym.'

'Well, it really is but a shadowy supposition; for unfortunately I am going to live. I feel myself getting better. Thomasin, how long are you going to stay at the inn, now that all this money has come to your husband?'

'Another month, probably; until my illness is over. We cannot get off till then. I think it will be a month or more.'

'Yes, yes. Of course. Ah, cousin Tamsie, you will get over your trouble—one little month will take you through it, and bring something to console you; but I shall never get over mine, and no consolation will come.'

'Clym, you are unjust to yourself. Depend upon it, aunt thought kindly of you. I know that, had she lived, you would have been reconciled with her.'

'But she didn't come to see me, though I asked her, before I married, if she would come. Had she come, or had I gone there, she would never have died saying, "I am a broken-hearted woman, cast off by my son." My door has always been open to her—a welcome here has always awaited her. But that she never came to see.'

'You had better not talk any more now, Clym,' said Eustacia faintly from the other part of the room, for the scene was growing intolerable to her.

'Let me talk to you instead, for the little time I shall be here,' Thomasin said soothingly. 'Consider what a one-sided way you have of looking at the matter, Clym. When she said that to the

little boy, you had not found her and taken her into your arms; and it might have been uttered in a moment of bitterness. It was rather like aunt to say things in haste. She sometimes used to speak so to me. Though she did not come, I am convinced that she thought of coming to see you. Do you suppose a man's mother could live two or three months without one forgiving thought? She forgave me; and why should she not have forgiven you?'

'You laboured to win her round: I did nothing. I, who was going to teach people the higher secrets of happiness, did not know how to keep out of that gross misery which the most untaught are wise enough to avoid.'

'How did you get here to-night, Thomasin?' said Eustacia.

'Damon set me down at the end of the lane. He has driven into the village on business, and he will come and pick me up by-and-by.'

Accordingly they soon after heard the noise of wheels. Wildeve had come, and was waiting outside in his horse and gig.

'Send out and tell him I will be down in two minutes,' said Thomasin.

'I will run down myself,' said Eustacia.

She went down. Wildeve had alighted, and was standing before the horse's head when Eustacia opened the door. He did not turn for a moment, thinking the comer Thomasin. Then he looked, started ever so little, and said one word: 'Well?'

'I have not yet told him,' she replied in a whisper.

'Then don't do so till he is well—it will be fatal. You are ill yourself.'

'I am wretched. . . . O Damon,' she said, bursting into tears, 'I—I can't tell you how unhappy I am. I can hardly bear this. I can tell nobody of my trouble—nobody knows of it but you.'

'Poor girl!' said Wildeve, visibly affected at her distress, and at last led on so far as to take her hand. 'It is hard, when you have done nothing to deserve it, that you should have got involved in such a web as this. You were not made for these sad scenes. I am to blame most. If I could only have saved you from it all!'

'But, Damon, please—pray tell me what I must do! To sit by him hour after hour, and hear him reproach himself as being the cause of her death, and to know that I am the sinner if any human being is at all, drives me into cold despair. I don't know what to do. Should I tell him, or should I not tell him?—I always am asking myself that. Oh, I want to tell him; and yet I am afraid. If he finds it out he must surely kill me, for nothing less will be in

proportion to his feelings now. "Beware the fury of a patient man" sounds day by day in my ears as I watch him.'

'Well, wait till he is better, and trust to chance. And when you tell, you must only tell part—for his own sake.'

'Which part should I reserve?'

Wildeve paused. 'That I was in the house at the time,' he said in a low tone.

'Yes; it must be concealed, seeing what has been whispered. How much easier are hasty actions than speeches that will excuse them!'

'If he were only to die—' Wildeve murmured.

'Do not think of it. I would not buy a hope of immunity by so cowardly a desire even if I hated him. Now I am going up to him again. Thomasin bade me tell you she would be down in a few minutes. Good-bye.'

She returned; and Thomasin soon appeared. When she was seated in the gig with her husband, and the horse was turning to go off, Wildeve lifted his eyes to the bedroom windows. Looking from one of them he could discern a pale tragical face, watching him drive away. It was Eustacia's.

CHAPTER II.

A LURID LIGHT BREAKS IN UPON A DARKENED UNDERSTANDING.

CLYM's grief became mitigated by wearing itself out. His strength returned, and a month after the visit of Thomasin he might have been seen walking about the garden. Hope and despair, brightness and gloom, the tints of health and the pallor of death, mingled weirdly in his face. He was now unnaturally silent upon all of the past that related to his mother; and though Eustacia knew that he was thinking of it none the less, she was only too glad to escape the topic ever to bring it up anew. When his mind had been weaker, his heart had led him to speak out; but reason having now somewhat recovered itself, he sank into taciturnity.

One evening when he was thus standing in the garden, abstractedly spudding up a weed with his stick, a bony figure turned the corner of the house, and came up to him.

'Christian, isn't it?' said Clym. 'I am glad you have found me out. I shall soon want you to go to Blooms-End and assist me in putting the house in order. I suppose it is all locked up as I left it?'

'Yes, Mister Clym.'

'Have you dug up the potatoes and roots?'

'Yes, without a drop o' rain, thank God. But I was coming to tell 'ee of ~~something~~ else which is quite different from what we have lately had in the family. I be sent by the rich gentleman at the Woman, that we used to call the landlord, to tell 'ee that Mrs. Wildeva is doing well of a girl, which was born ~~punctually~~ at one of the clock at noon, or a few minutes more or less; and 'tis said that expecting of this increase is what have kept 'em there since they came into their money.'

'And she is getting on well, you say?'

'Yes, sir. Only Mr. Wildeva is twanky because 'tishn't a boy—that's what they say in the kitchen, but I was not supposed to notice that.'

'Christian, now listen to me.'

'Yes, sure, Mister Yeobright.'

'Did you see my mother the day before she died?'

'No: I did not.'

Yeobright's face expressed disappointment.

'But I saw her the morning of the same day she died.'

Clym's look lighted up. 'That's nearer still to my meaning,' he said.

'Yes, I know 'twas the same day; for she said, "I am going to see him, Christian, so I shall not want any vegetables brought in for dinner."'

'See who?'

'See you. She was going to your house, you understand.'

Yeobright regarded Christian with intense surprise. 'Why did you never mention this?' he said. 'Are you sure it was my house she was coming to?'

'Oh, yes. I didn't mention it because I've never seed you lately. And as she didn't get there it was all nought, and nothing to tell.'

'And I have been wondering why she should have walked in the heath on that hot day! Well—did she say what she was coming for?—it is a thing, Christian, I am very anxious to know.'

'Yes, Mister Clym. She didn't say it to me, though I think she did to one here and there.'

'Do you know one person to whom she spoke of it?'

'There is one man, please sir, but I hope you won't mention my name to him, as I have seen him in strange places, particularly in dreams. One night last summer he glared at me like Famine and Sword, and it made me feel so low that I didn't comb out my few hairs for two days. He was standing, as it might be, Mister Yeobright, in the middle of the path to Mistover, and your mother came up looking as pale—'

'Yes, when was that?'

‘Last summer, in my dream.’

‘Pooh—who’s the man?’

‘Diggory, the reddleman. He called upon her and sat with her the evening before she set out to see you. I hadn’t gone home from work when he came up to the gate.’

‘I must see Venn—I wish I had known it before,’ said Clym anxiously. ‘I wonder why he has not come to tell me?’

‘He went out of Egdon Heath the next day, so would not be likely to know you wanted him.’

‘Christian,’ said Clym, ‘you must go and find Venn. I am otherwise engaged, or I would go myself. Find him at once, and tell him I want to speak to him.’

‘I am a good hand at hunting up folk by day,’ said Christian, looking dubiously round at the declining light; ‘but as to night-time, never is such a bad hand as I, Mister Yeobright.’

‘Search the heath when you will, so that you bring him soon. Bring him to-morrow, if you can.’

Christian then departed. The morrow came, but no Venn. In the evening Christian arrived, looking very weary. He had been searching all day, and had heard nothing of the reddleman.

‘Inquire as much as you can to-morrow without neglecting your work,’ said Yeobright. ‘Don’t come again till you have found him.’

The next day Yeobright set out for the old house at Blooms-End, which, with the garden, was now his own. His severe illness had hindered all preparations for his removal thither; but it had now become necessary that he should go and overlook its contents, as administrator to his mother’s little property; for which purpose he decided to pass the next night on the premises.

He journeyed onward not quickly or decisively, but in the slow walk of one who has been awakened from a stupefying sleep. It was early afternoon when he reached the valley. The expression of the place, the tone of the hour, were precisely those of many such occasions in days gone by; and these antecedent similarities fostered the illusion that she, who was there no longer, would come out to welcome him. The garden-gate was locked, and the shutters were closed, just as he himself had left them on the evening after the funeral. He unlocked the gate, and found that a spider had already constructed a large web, tying the door to the lintel, on the supposition that it was never to be opened again. When he had entered the house, and flung back the shutters, he set about his task of overhauling the cupboards and closets, burning papers, and considering how best to arrange the place for Eustacia’s re-

ception, until such time as he might be in a position to carry out his long-delayed scheme, should that time ever arrive.

As he surveyed the rooms, he felt strongly disinclined for the alterations which would have to be made in the time-honoured furnishing of his parents and grandparents, to suit Eustacia's modern ideas. The gaunt oak-cased clock, with the picture of the Ascension on the door-panel and the Miraculous Draught of Fishes on the base; his grandmother's corner-cupboard with the glass-door, through which the spotted china was visible; the dumb-waiter; the wooden tea-trays; the hanging fountain with the brass tap—whither would these venerable articles have to be banished?

He noticed that the flowers in the window had died for want of water, and he placed them out upon the ledge that they might be taken away. While thus engaged he heard footsteps on the gravel without, and somebody knocked at the door.

Yeobright opened it, and Venn was standing before him.

'Good-morning,' said the reddleman. 'Is Mrs. Yeobright at home?'

Yeobright looked upon the ground. 'Then you have not seen Christian, or any of the Egdon folks?' he said.

'No. I have only just returned after a long stay away. I called here the day before I left.'

'And you have heard nothing?'

'Nothing.'

'My mother is—dead.'

'Dead!' said Venn mechanically.

'Her home now is where I shouldn't mind having mine.'

Venn regarded him, and then said: 'If I didn't see your face, I could never believe your words. Have you been ill?'

'I had an illness.'

'Well, the change! When I parted from her a month ago everything seemed to say that she was going to begin a new life.'

'And what seemed, came true.'

'You say right, no doubt. Trouble has taught you a deeper vein of talk than mine. All I meant was regarding her life here. She has died too soon.'

'Perhaps through my living too long. I have had a bitter experience on that score, this last month, Diggory. But, come; for I have been wanting to see you.'

He conducted the reddleman into the large room where the dancing had taken place the previous Christmas; and they sat down in the settle together. 'There's the cold fire-place, you see,' said Clym. 'When that half-burnt log and those cinders were

alight, she was alive. Little has been changed here yet. I can do nothing. My life creeps like a snail.'

'How came she to die?' said Venn.

Yeobright gave him some particulars of her illness and death, and continued: 'After this, no kind of pain will ever seem more than an indisposition to me.—I began saying that I wanted to ask you something, but I stray from subjects like a drunken man. I am anxious to know what my mother said to you when she last saw you. You talked with her a long time, I think?'

'I talked with her more than half-an-hour.'

'About me?'

'Yes. And it must have been on account of what we said that she was on the heath. Without question she was coming to see you.'

'But why should she come to see me if she felt so bitterly against me? There's the mystery.'

'Yet I know she quite forgave 'ee.'

'But, Diggory, would a woman who had quite forgiven her son say, when she felt herself ill on the way to his house, that she was broken-hearted because of his ill-usage? Never!'

'What I know is, that she didn't blame you at all. She blamed herself for what had happened, and only herself. I had it from her own lips.'

'You had it from her lips that I had *not* ill-treated her; and at the same time another had it from her lips that I *had* ill-treated her. My mother was no impulsive woman who changed her opinion every hour without reason. How can it be, Venn, that she should have told such different stories in close succession?'

'I cannot say. It is certainly odd, when she had forgiven you, and had forgiven your wife, and was going to see ye on purpose to make friends.'

'If there was one thing wanting to stupefy me it was this incomprehensible thing. . . . Diggory, if we, who remain alive, were only allowed to hold conversation with the dead—just once, a bare minute, even through bars, as with persons in prison—what we might learn! How many who now ride smiling would hide their heads! And this mystery—I should then be at the bottom of it at once. But the grave has shut her in; and how shall it be found out now?'

No reply was returned by his companion, since none could be given; and when Venn left, a few minutes later, Clym had passed from the dulness of sorrow to the fluctuation of carking incertitude.

He continued in the same state all the afternoon. A bed was

made up for him in the same house, by a neighbour, that he might not have to return again the next day; and when he retired to rest in the deserted place, it was only to remain awake hour after hour thinking the same thoughts. How to discover a solution to this riddle of death seemed a query of more importance than highest problems of the living. There was housed in his memory a vivid picture of the face of the little boy as he entered the hovel where Clym's mother lay. The round eyes, the eager gaze, the piping voice which enunciated the words, had operated like stilettoes on his brain.

A visit to the boy suggested itself as a means of gleaning new particulars; though it might be quite unproductive. To probe a child's mind after the lapse of six weeks, not for facts which the child had seen and understood, but to get at those which were in their nature beyond him, did not promise much; yet when every obvious channel is blocked we grope towards the small and obscure. There was nothing else left to do; after that he would allow the enigma to drop into the abyss of undiscoverable things.

It was about daybreak when he had reached this decision, and he at once arose. He locked up the house and went out into the green patch which merged in heather farther on. Beyond the gate the path branched into three like a broad-arrow. The road to the right led to the 'Quiet Woman' and its neighbourhood; the middle track led to Mistover Knap; the left-hand track led over the hill to another part of Mistover, where the child lived. On inclining into the latter path Yeobright felt a creeping chilliness, familiar enough to most people, and probably caused by the unsunned morning air. In after days he thought of it as a thing of singular significance.

When Yeobright reached the cottage of Susan Nunsuch, the mother of the boy he sought, he found that the inmates were not yet astir. But in upland hamlets the transition from abed to abroad is surprisingly swift and easy. There no dense partition of yawns and toilets divides humanity by night from humanity by day. Yeobright tapped at the upper window-sill, which he could reach with his walking-stick; and in three or four minutes the woman came down.

It was not till this moment that Clym recollected her to be the person who had behaved so barbarously to Eustacia. It partly explained the insuavity with which the woman greeted him. Moreover, the boy had been ailing, and Susan, now, as ever since the night when he had been pressed into Eustacia's service at the bonfire, attributed his indisposition to Eustacia's influence as a witch; though she kept her opinion to herself. It was one of

those sentiments which lurk like moles underneath the visible surface of manners.

Yeobright overcame his repugnance, and asked kindly for the boy ; but her manner did not improve.

‘ I wish to see him,’ continued Yeobright, with some hesitation ; ‘ to ask him if he remembers anything more of his walk with my mother than what he has previously told.’

She regarded him in a peculiar and criticising manner. To anybody but a half-blind man it would have said, ‘ You want another of the knocks which have already laid you so low.’

She called the boy downstairs, asked Clym to sit down on a stool, and remarked, ‘ Now, Johnny, tell Mr. Yeobright anything you can call to mind.’

‘ You have not forgotten how you walked with the poor lady on that hot day ? ’ said Clym.

‘ No,’ said the boy.

‘ And what she said to you ? ’

The boy repeated the exact words he had used on entering the hut. Yeobright rested his elbow on the table, and shaded his face with his hand ; and the mother looked as if she wondered how a man could want more of what had stung him so deeply.

‘ She was going to Alderworth when you first met her ? ’

‘ No ; she was coming away.’

‘ That, can’t be.’

‘ Yes ; she walked along with me. I was coming away too.’

‘ Then, where did you first see her ? ’

‘ At your house.’

‘ Attend, and speak the truth ! ’ said Clym sternly.

‘ Yes, sir ; at your house was where I seed her first.’

Clym started up, and Susan smiled in an expectant way, which did not embellish her face ; it seemed to mean, ‘ Something sinister is coming ! ’

‘ What did she do at my house ? ’

‘ She went and sat under the trees at the Devil’s Bellows.’

‘ Good God ! this is all news to me ! ’

‘ You never told me this before ? ’ said Susan.

‘ No, mother ; because I didn’t like to tell ’ee I had been so far : I was picking black-hearts, and they don’t grow nearer.’

‘ What did she do then ? ’ said Yeobright.

‘ Looked at a man who came up and went into your house.’

‘ That was myself—a furze-cutter, with brambles in his hand ? ’

‘ No ; ’twas not you. ’Twas a gentleman, You had gone in afore.’

‘ Who was he ? ’

‘I don’t know.’

‘Now tell me what happened next.’

‘The poor lady went and knocked at your door, and the lady with black hair looked out of the side window at her.’

The boy’s mother turned to Clym and said, ‘This seems to be something you didn’t expect?’

Yeobright took no more notice of her than if he had been of stone. ‘Go on, go on,’ he said hoarsely to the boy.

‘And when she saw the young lady look out of the window, the old lady knocked again, and when nobody came she took up the furze-hook and looked at it, and put it down again, and then she looked at the faggot-bonds, and then she went away, and walked across to me, and blowed her breath very hard like this. We walked on together, she and I, and I talked to her and she talked to me a bit, but not much, because she couldn’t blow her breath.’

‘Oh!’ murmured Clym, in a low tone, and bowed his head. ‘Let’s have more,’ he said.

‘She couldn’t talk much, and she couldn’t walk, and her face was O so queer.’

‘How was her face?’

‘Like yours is now.’

The woman looked at Yeobright, and beheld him colourless. ‘Isn’t there meaning in it?’ she said stealthily. ‘What do you think of her now?’

‘Silence!’ said Clym fiercely. And turning to the boy: ‘And then you left her to die?’

‘No,’ said the woman, quickly and angrily. ‘He did not leave her to die. She sent him away. Whoever says he forsook her, says what’s not true.’

‘Trouble no more about that,’ answered Clym, with a quivering mouth. ‘What he did is a trifle in comparison with what he saw. Door kept shut, did you say? Kept shut, she looking out of window? Good heart of God, what does it mean?’

The child shrank away from the gaze of his questioner.

‘He said so,’ answered the mother, ‘and Johnny’s a God-fearing boy, and tells no lies.’

“‘Cast off by my son’!”—No, by my best life, dear mother, it is not so! But by your son’s—your son’s— May all murderesses get the torment they deserve!’

With these words Yeobright went forth from the little dwelling. The pupils of his eyes, fixed steadfastly on blankness, were vaguely lit with an icy shine; his mouth had passed into the phase more or less imaginatively rendered in studies of Laocöon. The

strangest deeds were possible to his mood. But they were not possible to his situation. Instead of there being before him the pale face of Eustacia, and a masculine shape unknown, there was only the imperturbable countenance of the heath, which, having defied the cataclysmal onsets of centuries, reduced to insignificance by its seamed and antique features the wildest turmoil of a single man.

CHAPTER III.

EUSTACIA DRESSES HERSELF UNDER SAD CIRCUMSTANCES.

A CONSCIOUSNESS of the vast impassivity of all which lay around him took possession even of Yeobright in his wild walk towards Mistover. He had once before felt in his own person this overpowering of the fervid by the inanimate ; but then it had tended to enervate a passion far sweeter than that which at present pervaded him. It was once when he stood parting from Eustacia in the moist still levels beyond the hills.

But dismissing all this, he went onward again, and came to the front of his house. The blinds of Eustacia's bedroom were still closely drawn, for she was no early riser. All the life visible was in the shape of a solitary thrush cracking a small snail upon the doorstone for his breakfast, and his tapping seemed a loud noise in the general silence which prevailed ; but on going to the door Clym found it unfastened, the young girl who attended upon Eustacia being astir in the back part of the premises. Yeobright entered and went straight to his wife's room.

The noise of his arrival must have aroused her, for when he opened the door she was standing before the looking-glass in her night-dress, the ends of her hair gathered into one hand, with which she was coiling the whole mass round her head, previous to commencing toilet operations. She was not a woman given to speaking first at a meeting, and she allowed Clym to walk across in silence, without turning her head. He came behind her, and she saw his face in the glass. It was ashy, haggard, and terrible. Instead of starting towards him in sorrowful surprise, as even Eustacia, undemonstrative wife as she was, would have done in days before she burdened herself with a secret, she remained motionless, looking at him in the glass. And while she looked, the carmine flush with which warmth and sound sleep had suffused her cheeks and neck dissolved from view, and the death-like pallor in his face flew across into hers. He was close enough to see this, and the sight instigated his tongue.

'You know what is the matter,' he said huskily. 'I see it in your face.'

Her hand relinquished the rope of hair, and dropped to her side, and the pile of tresses, no longer supported, fell from the crown of her head about her shoulders and over the white night-gown in inky streams. She made no reply.

‘Speak to me,’ said Yeobright peremptorily.

The blanching process did not cease in her, and her lips now became as white as her face. One familiar with the Stoic philosophy would have fancied that he saw the delicate tissue of her soul extricating itself from her body, and leaving it a simple heap of cold clay. She turned to him and said, ‘Yes, Clym, I’ll speak to you. Why do you return so early—can I do anything for you?’

‘Yes, you can listen to me. It seems that my wife is not very well.’

‘Why?’

‘Your face, my dear; your face. Or perhaps it is the pale morning light which takes your colour away? Now I am going to reveal a secret to you. Ha-ha!’

‘Oh, that is ghastly!’

‘What?’

‘Your laugh.’

‘There’s reason for ghastliness.—Eustacia, you have held my happiness in the hollow of your hand, and like a devil you have dashed it down!’

She started back from the dressing-table, retreated a few steps from him, and looked him in the face. ‘Ah! you think to frighten me,’ she said, with a slight laugh. ‘Is it worth while? I am undefended, and alone.’

‘How extraordinary!’

‘What do you mean?’

‘As there is ample time I will tell you, though you know well enough. I mean that it is extraordinary that you should be alone in my absence. Tell me now, where is he who was with you on the afternoon of the thirty-first of August? Under the bed? Up the chimney?’

A shudder overcame her, and shook the delicate fabric of her night-dress throughout. ‘I do not remember dates so exactly,’ she said. ‘I cannot recollect that anybody was with me besides yourself.’

‘The day I mean,’ said Yeobright, his voice growing louder and harsher, ‘was the day you shut the door against my mother, and killed her. Oh, it is too much—too bad!’ He leant over the footpiece of the bedstead for a few moments, with his back towards her; then, rising again: ‘Tell me, tell me! tell me—do you hear?’

he cried, rushing up to her, and seizing her by the loose folds of her sleeve.

The superstratum of timidity which often overlies those who are daring and defiant at heart had been passed through, and the mettlesome substance of the woman was reached. The red blood inundated her face, previously so pale.

‘What are you going to do?’ she said in a low voice, regarding him with a proud smile. ‘You will not alarm me by holding on so; but it would be a pity to tear my sleeve.’

Instead of letting go, he drew her closer to him. ‘Tell me the particulars of—my mother’s death,’ he said in a hard panting whisper; ‘or—I’ll—I’ll——’

‘Clym,’ she answered slowly, ‘do you think you dare do anything to me that I dare not bear? But before you strike me, listen. You will get nothing from me by a blow, even though it should kill me, as it probably will. But perhaps you do not wish me to speak—killing may be all you mean.’

‘Kill you! Do you expect it?’

‘I do.’

‘Why?’

‘No less degree of rage against me will match your previous grief for her.’

‘Phew—I shall not kill you,’ he said contemptuously. ‘That would be making a martyr of you, and sending you to where she is; and I would keep you away from her till heaven and hell come to an end if I could.’

‘I almost wish you would kill me,’ said she with gloomy bitterness. ‘It is with no strong desire, I assure you, that I play the part I have lately played on earth. You are no blessing, my husband.’

‘You shut the door—you looked out of the window upon her—you had a man in the house with you—you sent her away to die. The inhumanity!—the treachery!—I will not touch you—stand away from me—and confess every word!’

‘Never. I’ll hold my tongue like the very death that I don’t mind meeting, even though I can clear myself of half you believe by speaking. Yes, I will! Who of any dignity would take the trouble to clear cobwebs from a wild man’s mind after such language as this? No; let him go on, and think his narrow thoughts, and run his head into the mire. I have other cares.’

‘Tis too much—but I must spare you.’

‘Poor charity!’

‘By my wretched soul, you sting me, Eustacia. I can keep it up, and hotly too. Now then, madame, tell me his name!’

‘Never, I am resolved.’

‘How often does he write to you? Where does he put his letters? when does he meet you? Ah, his letters! Do you tell me his name?’

‘I do not.’

‘Then I’ll find it myself.’ His eye had fallen upon a small desk that stood near, on which she was accustomed to write her letters. He went to it. It was locked.

‘Unlock this.’

‘You have no right to say it. That’s mine.’

Without another word he seized the desk and dashed it to the floor. The hinge burst open, and a number of letters tumbled out.

‘Stay!’ said Eustacia, stepping before him with more excitement than she had hitherto shown.

‘Come, come! stand away! I must see them.’

She looked at the letters as they lay, checked her feeling, and moved indifferently aside; when he gathered them up, and examined them.

By no stretch of meaning could any but a harmless construction be placed upon a single one of the letters themselves. The solitary exception was an empty envelope directed to her, and the handwriting was Wildeve’s. Yeobright held it up. Eustacia was doggedly silent.

‘Can you read, madame? Look at this envelope. Doubtless we shall find more soon, and what was inside them. I shall no doubt be gratified by learning in good time what a well-finished and full-blown adept in a certain trade my lady is.’

‘Do you say it to me—do you?’ she gasped.

He searched further; but found nothing more. ‘What was in this letter?’ he said.

‘Ask the writer. Am I your hound, that you should talk to me in this way?’

‘Do you brave me? do you stand me out, mistress? Answer! Don’t look at me with those eyes, as if you would bewitch me again! Sooner than that, I’d die. You refuse to answer?’

‘I wouldn’t tell you after this, if I were as innocent as the sweetest babe in heaven.’

‘Which you are not.’

‘Certainly I am not,’ she repeated. ‘If to have done no harm at all is the only innocence recognised, I am beyond forgiveness. But I require no help from your conscience.’

‘You can resist, and resist again. Instead of hating you, I could, I think, mourn for and pity you, if you were contrite, and

would confess all. Forgive you I never can. I don't speak of your lover—I will give you the benefit of the doubt in that matter, for it only affects me personally. But the other: had you half-killed *me*, had it been that you wilfully took the sight away from these feeble eyes of mine, I could have forgiven you. But *that's* too much for nature.'

'Say no more. I will do without your pity. But I would have saved you from uttering what you will regret.'

'I am going away now. I shall leave you.'

'You need not go, as I am going myself. You will keep just as far away from me by staying here.'

'Call her to mind—think of her—what goodness there was in her: it showed in every line of her face! Most women, even when but slightly annoyed, show a flicker of evil in some curl of the mouth or some corner of the cheek; but as for her, never in her angriest moments was there anything malicious in her look. She was angered quickly, but she forgave just as readily, and underneath her pride there was the meekness of a child. What came of it?—what cared you? You hated her just as she was learning to love you. Oh, couldn't you see what was best for you, but must bring a curse upon me, and agony and death upon her, by doing that cruel deed! What was the devil's name who was keeping you company and causing you to add cruelty to her to your wrong to me? Was it Wildevé? Was it poor Thomasin's husband? Heaven, what wickedness! Lost your voice, have you? It is natural after detection of that most noble trick. . . . Eustacia, didn't any tender thought of your own mother lead you to think of being gentle to mine at such a time of weariness? Did not one grain of pity enter your heart as she turned away? Think what a vast opportunity was then lost of beginning a forgiving and honest course. Why did not you kick him out, and let her in, and say, I'll be an honest wife and a noble woman from this hour. Had I told you to go and quench eternally our last flickering chance of happiness here, you could have done no worse.—Well, she's asleep now; and have you a hundred gallants, neither they nor you can insult her any more.'

'You exaggerate fearfully,' she said in a faint weary voice; 'but I cannot enter into my defence—it is not worth doing. You are nothing to me in future, and the other side of the story may as well remain untold. I have lost all through you, but I have not complained. Your blunders and misfortunes may have been a sorrow to you; but they have been a wrong to me. All persons of refinement have been scared away from me since I sank into the mire of marriage. Is this your cherishing—to put me into a

hut like this, and keep me like the wife of a hind? You deceived me—not by words, but by appearances, which are—less seen through than words. But the place will serve as well as any other—as somewhere to pass from—into my grave.’ Her words were smothered in her throat, and her head drooped down.

‘I don’t know what you mean by that. Am I the cause of your sin? . . . What! you can begin to shed tears, and offer me your hand? Good God, can you? No, not I. I’ll not commit the fault of taking that.’ The hand she had offered dropped nervelessly, but the tears continued flowing. ‘Well, yes, I’ll take it, if only for the sake of my own foolish kisses that were wasted there before I knew what I cherished. How bewitched I was! How could there be any good in a woman that everybody spoke ill of?’

‘Oh, oh, oh!’ she cried, breaking into shaking sobs which choked her, and sinking on her knees. ‘Will you have done! Oh, you are too relentless—there’s a limit to the cruelty of savages! I have held out long—but you crush me down. I beg for mercy—I cannot bear this any longer—it is inhuman to go further with this! If I had—killed your—mother with my own hand—I should not deserve such a scourging to the bone as this! Oh, oh! God have mercy upon a miserable woman! . . . You have beaten me in this game—I beg you to stay your hand in pity! . . I confess that I—wilfully—did not undo the door the first time she knocked—but—I—should have unfastened it the second—if I had not thought you had gone to do it yourself. When I found you had not, I opened it, but she was gone. That’s the extent of my crime. Best natures commit bad faults sometimes, don’t they?—I think they do. Now I will leave you—for ever and ever.’

‘Tell all, and I *will* pity you. Was the man in the house with you, Wildevé?’

‘I cannot tell,’ she said desperately through her sobbing. ‘Don’t insist further—I cannot tell. I am going from this house. We cannot both stay here.’

‘You need not go: I will go. You can stay here.’

‘No, I will dress, and then I will go.’

‘Where?’

‘Where I came from, or *elsewhere*.’

She hastily dressed herself, Yeobright moodily walking up and down the room the whole of the time. At last all her things were on. Her poor little hands quivered so violently as she held them to her chin to fasten her bonnet that she could not tie the strings, and after a few moments she relinquished the attempt. Seeing this, he moved forward and said, ‘Let me tie them.’

She assented in silence, and lifted her chin. For once at least

in her life she was totally oblivious of the charm of her attitude. But he was not, and he turned his eyes aside that he might not be tempted to softness.

The strings were tied; she turned from him. 'Do you still prefer going away yourself to my leaving you?' he inquired again.

'I do.'

She flung her shawl about her and went downstairs, leaving him standing in the room.

Eustacia had not long been gone when there came a knock at the door of the bedroom; and Yeobright said, 'Well?'

It was the servant; and she replied, 'Somebody from Mrs. Wildeve's have called to tell 'ee that the mis'ess and the baby are getting on wonderful well; and the baby's name is to be Eustacia Clymentine.' And the girl retired.

'What a mockery!' said Clym. 'That this unhappy marriage should be perpetuated in that child's name.'

CHAPTER IV.

THE MINISTRATIONS OF A HALF-FORGOTTEN ONE.

EUSTACIA'S journey was at first as vague in direction as that of thistle-down in the wind. She did not know what to do. She wished it had been night instead of morning, that she might at least have borne her misery without the possibility of being seen. At length she turned her steps towards her grandfather's house. On reaching it she found the front door closed and locked. Mechanically she went round to the end, where the stable was, and on looking in at the stable-door she saw Charley standing within.

'Captain Drew is not at home?' she said.

'No, ma'am,' said the lad in a flutter of feeling; 'he's gone to Southerton, and won't be home till night. And the servant is gone home for a holiday. So the house is locked up.'

Eustacia's face was not visible to Charley as she stood at the doorway, her back being to the sky, and the stable but indifferently lighted; but the wildness of her manner arrested his attention at once. She turned and walked away across the enclosure, to the gate, and was hidden by the bank.

When she had disappeared, Charley, with misgiving in his eyes, slowly came from the stable-door, and going to another point in the bank he looked over. Eustacia was leaning against it on the outside, her face covered with her hands, and her head pressing the dewy heather which bearded the bank's outer side. She

appeared to be utterly indifferent to the circumstance that her bonnet, hair, and garments were becoming wetted and disarranged by the moisture of her cold harsh pillow. Clearly something was wrong.

Charley had always regarded Eustacia as Eustacia had regarded Clym when she first beheld him—as a romantic and sweet vision, scarcely incarnate. He had been so shut off from her by the dignity of her look and the pride of her speech, except at that one blissful interval when he was allowed to hold her hand, that he had hardly deemed her a woman, wingless and earthly, subject to household conditions and domestic jars. The inner details of her life he had only conjectured. She had been a lovely wonder, predestined to an orbit in which the whole of his own was but a point; and this sight of her, leaning like a helpless despairing creature against a wild wet bank, filled him with an amazed horror. He could no longer remain where he was. Leaping over, he came up, touched her with his finger, and said tenderly, ‘You are poorly, ma’am. What can I do?’

Eustacia started up, and said, ‘Ah, Charley—you have followed me. You did not think when I left home in the summer that I should come back like this!’

‘I did not, dear ma’am. Can I help you now?’

‘I am afraid not. I wish I could get into the house. I feel giddy—that’s all.’

‘Lean on my arm, ma’am, till we get to the porch; and I will try to open the door.’

He supported her to the porch, and there depositing her on a seat, hastened to the back, climbed to a window by the help of a ladder, and descending inside, opened the door. Next he assisted her into the room, where there was an old-fashioned horse-hair settee as large as a donkey-waggon. She lay down here, and Charley covered her with a cloak he found in the hall.

‘Shall I get you something to eat and drink?’ he said.

‘If you please, Charley. But I suppose there is no fire.’

‘I can light it, ma’am.’

He vanished, and she heard a splitting of wood and a blowing of bellows; and presently he returned saying, ‘I have lighted a fire in the kitchen, and now I’ll light one here.’

He lit the fire, Eustacia dreamily observing him from her couch. When it was blazing up he said, ‘Shall I wheel you round in front of it, ma’am, as the morning is chilly?’

‘Yes, if you like.’

‘Shall I go and bring the breakfast now?’

‘Yes, do,’ she murmured languidly.

When he had gone, and the dull sounds occasionally reached her ears of his movements in the kitchen, she forgot where she was, and had for a moment to consider by an effort what the sounds meant. After an interval which seemed short to her whose thoughts were elsewhere, he came in with a tray, on which steamed tea and toast.

‘Place it on the table,’ she said. ‘I shall be ready soon.’

He did so, and retired to the door: when, however, he perceived that she did not move, he came back a few steps.

‘Let me hold it to you, if you don’t wish to get up,’ said Charley. He brought the tray to the front of the couch, where he knelt down, adding, ‘I will hold it for you.’

Eustacia sat up and poured out a cup of tea. ‘You are very kind to me, Charley,’ she murmured, as she sipped.

‘Well, I ought to be,’ said he diffidently, taking great trouble not to rest his eyes upon her, though this was their only natural position, Eustacia being immediately before him. ‘You have been kind to me.’

‘How have I?’ said Eustacia.

‘You let me hold your hand when you were a maiden at home.’

‘Ah, so I did. Why did I do that? My mind is lost—it had to do with the mumming, had it not?’

‘Yes, you wanted to go in my place.’

‘I remember. I do indeed remember too well!’

She again became utterly downcast, and Charley, seeing that she was not going to eat or drink any more, took away the tray.

Afterwards he occasionally came in to see if the fire was burning, to ask her if she wanted anything, to tell her that the wind had shifted from south to west, to ask her if she would like him to gather her some blackberries; to all which inquiries she replied in the negative, or with indifference.

She remained on the settee some time longer, when she aroused herself and went upstairs. The room in which she had formerly slept still remained much as she had left it, and the recollection that this forced upon her, of her own greatly changed and infinitely worsened situation, again set on her face the undetermined and formless misery which it had worn on her first arrival. She peeped into her grandfather’s room, through which the fresh autumn air was blowing from the open windows. Her eye was arrested by what was a familiar sight enough, though it broke upon her now with a new significance.

It was a brace of pistols, hanging near the head of her grandfather’s bed, which he always kept there loaded as a precaution against possible burglars, the house being very lonely. Eustacia

regarded them long, as if they were the page of a book in which she read a new and a strange matter. Quickly, like one afraid of herself, she returned downstairs, and stood in deep thought.

‘If I could only do it!’ she said. ‘It would be doing much good to myself and all connected with me; and no harm to a single one.’

The idea seemed to gather force within her, and she remained in a fixed attitude nearly ten minutes, when a certain finality was expressed in her gaze, and no longer the blankness of indecision.

She turned and went up the second time—softly and stealthily now—and entered her grandfather’s room, her eyes at once seeking the head of the bed. The pistols were gone.

The instant nullification of her accumulated purpose by their absence affected her brain as a sudden vacuum affects the body; she nearly fainted. Who had done this? There was only one person on the premises besides herself. Eustacia involuntarily turned to the open window which overlooked the garden as far as the bank which bounded it. On the summit of the latter stood Charley, sufficiently elevated by its height to see into the room. His gaze was directed eagerly and solicitously upon her.

She went downstairs to the door, and beckoned to him.

‘You have taken them away!’

‘Yes, ma’am.’

‘Why did you do it?’

‘I saw you looking at them too long.’

‘What has that to do with it?’

‘You have been heart-broken all the morning, as if you did not want to live.’

‘Well?’

‘And I could not bear to leave them in your way. There was meaning in your look at them.’

‘Where are they now?’

‘Locked up.’

‘Where?’

‘In the stable.’

‘Give them to me.’

‘No, ma’am.’

‘You refuse?’

‘I do. I care too much for you to give ’em up.’

She turned aside, her face for the first time softening from the stony immobility of the earlier day, and the corners of her mouth resuming something of that delicacy of cut which was always lost in her moments of despair. At last she confronted him again.

‘Why should I not die if I wish?’ she said tremulously. ‘I

have made a bad bargain with life, and I am weary of it—wearily! And now you have hindered my escape. Oh, why did you, Charley! What makes death painful except the thought of others' grief?—and that is absent in my case, for not a sigh would follow me!

'Ah, it is trouble that has done this! I wish in my very soul that he who brought it about might die and rot, even if 'tis transportation to say it!'

'Charley, no more of that. What do you mean to do about this you have seen?'

'Keep it close as night, if you promise not to think of it again.'

'You need not fear. The moment has passed. I promise.' She then went away, entered the house, and lay down.

Later in the afternoon her grandfather returned. He was about to question her categorically; but on looking at her he withheld his words.

'Yes; it is too bad to talk of,' she slowly returned in answer to his glance. 'Can my old room be got ready for me to-night, grandfather? I shall want to occupy it again.'

He did not ask what it all meant, or why she had left her husband; but ordered the room to be prepared.

(To be continued.)

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